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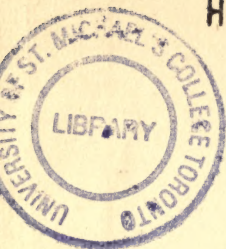


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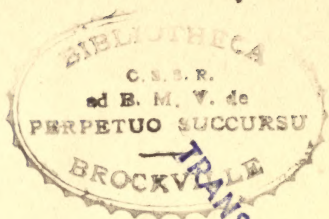
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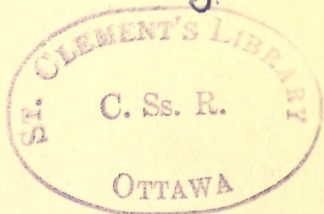


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SKELETON SERMONS

SKELETON SERMONS

FOR THE SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS
IN THE YEAR

BY

JOHN B. BAGSHAWE, D.D.

LATE CANON PENITENTIARY OF SOUTHWARK



SECOND IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

MY object in publishing these "Skeleton Sermons" is to help my brother-priests in emergencies. We, most of us, occasionally find that we haven't much time for preparing our sermons, and our ideas sometimes seem to run short, especially when we have to preach on the same subject over and over again. At such times it is a great convenience to have a plan of a sermon drawn up ready to one's hand. Such a plan is likely, at any rate, to suggest a new line of thought, which we can carry out in our own way.

These Sermons are made pretty full, suggesting, perhaps, more subjects than it is expedient to introduce into one discourse. They are put in this way in order that anyone using the Sketches may take the points that suit him best, and develop them according to his own lights. Of course, neither these nor any other Sketches can be of much use to a preacher unless he makes the points his own, so that they may have the impress of his own mind upon them.

I have quoted a good many texts of Scripture—generally well-known and obvious ones—

Preface

because I think it most expedient, when we can, to enforce our teaching by the very words of the inspired writers. St. Peter says : “ If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God,” and all preachers ought to have the Word of God in their minds and on their lips whilst addressing their flocks.

These Sermons, may, perhaps, also be useful to some people in making their Meditations. The Sermons are, generally, on the Gospels, and so can hardly fail to afford a good many points of consideration for those who like to have their Meditations put concisely.

Most of these Sketches have already appeared in our excellent clerical periodical, *Pastoralia*. That form, however, is not particularly convenient, and the periodical is not intended for the general public. I have, therefore, added a few Sermons to make the Sundays and Feasts of the year complete, and I hope they may be useful in this form.

J. B. B.

RICHMOND, *March* 1893.

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SKELTON SERMONS

I

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

AWAKENING

INTRODUCTION.—“ Rise, thou that sleepest— and Christ shall enlighten thee.”—*Eph.* v. 14.

Advent, beginning a new year : the coming of our Lord, the great light of the world : “ Have seen a great light.”—*Isa.* ix. 2. “ Light to the revelation.”—*St. Luke* ii. 32.

What better can the Church do than urge us to “ rise from sleep for the Lord is nigh ” ? She calls, not on sinners only, but on all.

I. “ The bridegroom tarrying they all slumbered and slept.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 5.

1. Special danger of man. “ Never continueth.”—*Job* xiv. 2.

Senses dulled by routine : the clear becomes dull ; the terrible indifferent.

2. So with religion—as drowsiness steals over us, religious truths, once so penetrating, become meaningless ; principles, once so clear, vague ;

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its Mysteries and Sacraments, once so awe-inspiring, commonplace.

3. "While men were asleep the enemy came."—*St. Matt.* xiii. 25. The enemy's great opportunity; how many saints and heroes have fallen in the hour of drowsiness?

4. "Watch and pray," lest you, too, sleep and fall away.

II. "They have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands."—*Ps.* lxxv. 6.

1. How men sleep around! Men of the world, of letters, and of science, of pleasure—all asleep to true interests! What an awakening—to find their cherished objects pebbles and sand—and not pearls!

e.g. A statesman — successful — worshipped by the world till he thinks himself a god—waking to find—what?

2. Do Christians sleep less profoundly? Many kinds of sleep. The sleep of mortal sin. A Catholic living in habitual mortal sin—enemy of God—suspended over hell—yet calm and heedless. How profound must be his sleep!

3. Tepidity, too. The tepid man cares for *nothing* spiritual; nothing reaches his understanding, excites his imagination, or warms his heart. Is it not an unaccountable slumber?

Awakening

4. All mortals sleep in *some* way—even the saints—and they knew it well; we all need these spirit-stirring calls: “It is now the hour.”

III. “Enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death.”—*Ps.* xii. 4.

1. To rouse us we want our Lord’s light. “Send forth Thy light and Thy truth.”—*Ps.* xlii. 3. “Enlighteneth every man.”—*St. John* i. 9. The great enlightener is prayer; *redouble* your prayer—go more freely and fully into God’s presence. “In Him there is no darkness.”—*1 St. John* i. 5.

2. “Put on the Lord Jesus.” “Put ye on the armour of Light.” Watching with Him. “Could you not watch?”—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 40. Clothed in His merits; walking in His footsteps.

3. Remembering always “the day is at hand”—our *great* day of awakening.

CONCLUSION.—“Our salvation is nearer than when we believed.”

1. We are very soon to celebrate again His first coming.

2. That celebration should remind us that His *second* coming (oh, how different!) is not far off.

II

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

COURAGE

INTRODUCTION.—“A prophet—yea, and more than a prophet.” Example of St. John put before us—prophet and precursor; none “born of women” greater; our Lord’s personal friend.

Sent to prepare the way by words of fire—still more, by example. “Camel’s hair,” “locusts and wild honey”—effect of such an example on a luxurious world!

The lessons his character gives. Our Lord says :

I. “A reed shaken by the wind!”

1. Necessity of courage in religion—no *real* virtue without it; “*virtus*” means courage. How contemptible religion without it!—a soldier who won’t fight!—a fair-weather sailor! Can you be cowardly without denying? “He who denies Me,” etc.

Yet many, brave in other things, are cowardly

Courage

in religion—the besetting sin of many of those who are brave and strong before the world.

2. Courage means power to resist *violence*, *ridicule*, and *blandishments*—the storm and the hot sun.

3. Cowardice, chiefly shown by

Agreeing with everybody—talked over by fine words ; hiding the faith, and afraid of ridicule, “For with the heart . . . but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”—*Rom.* x. 10. Afraid to hear Mass, and keep Friday, to please the world ; afraid to do disagreeable duties. Shirking whatever needs firmness. Neglecting to guide, control those under your charge : and perhaps to bring them up good Catholics.

4. How disgraceful this want of manliness. How many women and children have given their blood ! Yet men ?

II. “Every best gift . . . is from above.”—*St. James* i. 17. Religious courage not a mere question of nerves.

1. You can certainly get all necessary courage from God. How many weaker than you ?

2. It is a question of salvation. God accepts many things as excuses—but not cowardice. “*Human respect*” makes things *worse*, and not better : “I neglected a plain duty for fear of

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my wife and family"—or "for fear of being laughed at"—will not stand good.

3. Courage and cowardice are matters of habit. One victory leads to another. Be brave in little things—and great ones will be easy.

4. Our earliest lesson ought to be to stand up for the faith. Do you teach it to your children? "Though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee."—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 35.

5. Remember our Lord's "Good confession before Pontius Pilate."—*1 Tim.* vi. 13.

III. "A man clothed in soft garments."

Cowardice goes very often with fine clothes, high position, and luxurious habits. These are the world's baits.

1. If you wish to be brave, you mustn't care too much for fine things. "Went away sad, for he had many possessions."—*St. Matt.* xix. 22. St. Laurence distributing the money before his martyrdom, etc.

2. You mustn't too greatly value the opinion of the world. "Know you not that the friendship of this world is the enemy of God?"—*St. James* iv. 4.

3. You must shake off—or fight against—love of ease and hatred of mortification—the vice of the age—"If anyone will come after Me," etc.—*St. Matt.* xvi. 24.

Courage

CONCLUSION.—Religion without courage and self-sacrifice is a poor thing : it may cheat us but cannot please God. If we would have “Peace and joy in believing,” we must learn to fight and suffer manfully for our faith.

III

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

INTRODUCTION.—“Clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.”—*Apoc.* xii. 1.

This great honour to our Lady—the brightest jewel in her crown—reserved for our own age to define.

Each age in turn adds to her honour; naturally—since the wonders of the Incarnation can *never* be exhausted, but increase the more they are meditated on.

1. “God sent His Son, made of a woman.”—*Gal.* iv. 4.

1. The Immaculate Conception does not imply any participation of Divine Nature—by nature “a woman,” in all respects like us. A virgin, pure, not only by sinlessness, but by having a simply human nature like ours.

2. Immaculate—not by *right*, but by *privilege*—“*singulari Dei privilegio*”—liable by nature and descent to original sin as we are.

3. Our Lord, too, is immaculate—but in a totally different sense, and therefore the term

The Immaculate Conception

is never applied to Him. He is so by *right*: sin *could* not conceivably come near Him. "Like as we are, without sin."—*Heb.* iv. 15.

His sinlessness raised above that of creatures as heaven above earth: "Tu solus sanctus, Tu solus Dominus, Tu solus altissimus."

4. Our Lady redeemed just as we are—only in a more perfect way—*rejoices* to owe her great privilege to her Son's merits.

II. "And there was nothing in the temple that was not covered with gold."—3 *Kings* vi. 22.

1. Most natural—to all who really believe and consider the Incarnation. Whom did our Lord love better? What higher gifts than sinlessness? "That my enemy shall not rejoice over me."—*Ps.* xl. 12.

He chose to redeem mankind through her instrumentality—natural that *she* should share, and *more* fully, in that redemption.

2. She was to be Queen of Angels, since the only rank in heaven is nearness to God—must she not have *at least* angelic purity? What they have by nature, she by special privilege. "Illæ cum timore . . . hæc . . . illi offert."—*St. Joan. Chrys. Fest. B.V.M. Lect.* vi.

3. Special honour to men—whose advocate she is made. "The Queen stood on Thy right hand," etc.—*Ps.* xlv. 10.

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4. Most of all—for the honour of her Son—“domus aurea,” “turr̄is eburnea.” The true holy of holies—lined throughout with gold; could it be otherwise?

III. “Thou art not a God that willest iniquity.”—*Ps.* v. 5.

Lessons of the feast :

1. How odious to God is every kind of sin : “Thou hast hated iniquity.”—*Ps.* xlv. 8. No talents, station, excellences, or deservings will make up. “Be ye holy.”—*Lev.* xi. 44.

2. “Be not without fear about sin forgiven.”—*Ecclus.* v. 5. Every sin leaves a *stain*—“Wash me yet more” (*Ps.* l. 4.)—and a *weakness* : therefore fear *every* deliberate sin.

3. “Illius in nobis culpæ vulnera reparent.” Postcom. Fest. We must remember how fragile we are ; avoid dangers, and look for help. Ask our Lady’s intercession.

CONCLUSION. — “Keep yourself unspotted from this world.”—*St. James* i. 27. Rejoice over a privilege so dear to our Lady—for itself and for the honour of her Son. Imitate her Immaculate Conception by aiming at perfection of holiness.

IV

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

PENANCE

INTRODUCTION. — “Except you do penance you shall all likewise perish.”—*St. Luke* xiii. 5.

St. John’s great work was to preach penance—the necessary preparation for Christ’s coming. “The Baptism of Penance for the remission of sins.”—*St. Luke* iii. 3.

The Church is now doing as St. John did, calling us.

1. To the Sacrament of Penance—“The open fountain.”—*Zach.* xiii. 1. It would be mockery to pretend to keep Christmas well without receiving the Sacraments.

2. More broadly, to a penitential spirit. “You know not of what spirit you are.”—*St. Luke* ix. 55. How can we find out without penance?

1. “I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.”—*St. John* vi. 38. “In the head of the book it is written of me that I should do Thy will, O God.”—*Heb.* x. 7.

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1. Penance implies giving up our own will. The excellence of all our Lord did came from His submission to His Father's will—"exinavit se."—*Phil.* ii. 7. "Obedientiam didicit."—*Heb.* v. 8. So the one thing which can give merit to our work or suffering is doing God's will—"To hearken rather than to offer."—*1 Kings* xv. 22. So of Abraham's sacrifice, and all the things pleasing to God.

2. In reality all religion consists in obedience—directly to God, to His Providence, to His Church, to lawful superiors. He is the best Christian who has the most complete, generous, persevering obedience. "He that doeth the will of My Father."

3. This is the hardest sacrifice—since our natural disposition is "non serviam" (*Jer.* ii. 20)—and the most precious. Naturally—since it offers to God the highest faculty we have—that free will which makes us like God—with which He will *never* interfere by force.

4. How can we learn to do this without penance? Penance means giving up our own will—going against our inclinations. "Bonum si jugum portaverit."—*Lament.* iii. 27. This you must practise, and the laws of the Church are largely meant to give you opportunities.

Penance

“Fiat voluntas tua”—“doing the will of God from the heart.”—*Eph.* vi. 6.

How much “giving up” is there in your religion?—of pride?—of sensuality?—of idleness?

II. “Refrain yourselves from carnal desires, which war against the soul.”—*I St. Peter* ii. 11.

We must take into account the “law in our members.”—*Rom.* vii. 23. No holiness or station is a guarantee against this—nothing but the spirit of penance. “The imagination and thought of man’s heart are prone to evil.”—*Gen.* viii. 21. What is the world but a display of this? Everywhere we look, in the most sheltered spot, always the same. “Who can make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed.”—*Job* xiv. 4. Only the grace of God and the spirit of penance. “Refraineth himself from all things.”—*I Cor.* ix. 25.

III. “God is not mocked, for what things a man shall sow these also shall he reap.”—*Gal.* vi. 8. “Be at agreement,” “till thou repay the last farthing.”—*St. Matt.* v. 25.

1. How great our debt! “That owed him ten thousand talents.”—*St. Matt.* xviii. 24.

2. How important not to ignore it! How offensive to God if we pretend to owe nothing!

3. We can only repay by penance and

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by love—"because she has loved much." How very far a little voluntary penance will go—which in this life we do for the love of God. "Whilst thou art in the way."

CONCLUSION.—"My chalice, indeed, you shall drink."—*St. Matt.* xx. 23. Considering what our Lord has done, and His saints have done—considering the dangers and trials of God's Church, and his own personal dangers—can any Christian pretend that he has no need of penance and may live in luxury? "The ark of God and Israel and Juda dwell in tents—shall I go into my house to eat and to drink."—*2 Kings* xi. 11.

V

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

OUR LORD'S COMING

INTRODUCTION.—“Prepare ye the way of the Lord.”—*Ev.*

How great the preparation.

1. *Externally*: The Jewish history — the Roman conquests—the enrolling, etc. *Internally*: “The expectation of nations” (*Gen.* xlix. 10)—“or look we for another?”—*St. Matt.* xi. 3. Men’s minds were prepared.

2. Preparation of loving heart of Mary: Immaculate—“full of grace.”

3 Our preparation. “Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the ways of Thy only-begotten Son.”—*Orat.* 2 *Adv.*

I. “There was no room for them in the inn.”—*St. Luke* ii. 7.

1. Think of Jesus turned from door to door: refused, scorned; people too proud—too anxious—too *full*—to receive Him.

2. Is there room in our souls?—are they

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filled by sin?—by unlawful desires and affections?—or by riches, honour, vanity?—by self-worship? Perhaps some great passion occupies them?

3. Think of the earnestness, zeal, and care of Mary and Joseph preparing the poor stable.

4. Give corresponding care to your souls. Make them clean, however poor: “domus pudici pectoris, templum repente fit Dei.

5. Especially make them abodes of peace: be “men of good-will.”

II. “Every valley shall be filled.”

1. What your deficiencies?—of consideration, depth, and warmth?—“in my meditation a fire shall flame out.”—*Ps.* xxxviii. 4. Does it? What deficiencies are there, in your faith? in your purpose and courage? in your prayer and mortification?

2. What mountains are there to remove? Self-worship, like Dagon beside the ark? actual sins? attachment to sinful things?

3. What crooked things to make straight? Want of straightforwardness? false pretences? and excuses? Serving God “*fraudulently.*”

III. “Preaching the Baptism of Penance.”

1. St. John calls all classes to penance at this time; can you resist his call?

2. Penance will wash you, however bad

Our Lord's Coming

you may have been. "If your sins be as scarlet," etc.—*Isa.* i. 18.

3. Penance will remedy all faults of character from which sins spring, if you persevere.

4. Penance is the fountain appointed by our Lord which purifies and makes invulnerable—"an open fountain."—*Zach.* xiii. 1.

CONCLUSION.—"As many as received Him, He gave them power to be made sons of God."—*St. John* i. 12.

Sons of God—and heirs of heaven—brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ—

Whom He will acknowledge with loving tenderness in the stable of Bethlehem, and hereafter in the glory of His kingdom.

VI

CHRISTMAS

THE NATIVITY

INTRODUCTION.—“Glory be to God on high.”

Heaven and earth resound with glory and peace. A song of triumph in heaven—for the greatest mystery of God’s omnipotence and love ; answered from earth with joy and thankfulness. “Let them speak that have been redeemed.”—*Ps.* cvi. 2. “Truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from the heaven.”—*Ps.* lxxxiv. 12.

Let us join in this universal hymn of praise.

I. “A child is born to us and a Son is given to us.”—*Isa.* ix. 6.

1. Born for *us*, “nobis datus, nobis natus” —*of* our race and *for* our race.

2. A Redeemer to the captive ; “born a Saviour.”

3. A Comforter to the desolate—to those “that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.”—*Ps.* cvi. 10.

4. To raise the fallen : “Ut nos Divinitatis suæ tribueret esse participes.”

The Nativity

5. To make us His brethren ; “ in all things to be made like unto His brethren.”—*Heb.* ii. 17.

II. “ Let us go to Bethlehem.”

1. All Christians—prince and peasant, rich and poor—on this night are one great family.

2. Let us go with the shepherds and behold His poverty—the poor walls and roof of our new-born King. “ The foxes have holes.” His humility : “ Taking the form of a servant.”—*Phil.* ii. 7. His gentleness : “ The bruised reed He shall not break.”—*Isa.* xlii. 3. His love : “ Propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem.”

3. “ And falling down they adored.”

With what humility should we adore ! “ Let all the angels of God adore Him.”—*Heb.* ii. 6. “ Natum videte Regem angelorum, venite adoremus.”

4. What can we offer Him—on His birthday ? At least our good resolutions and our hearts.

III. “ And the Word was made flesh.”—*St. John* i. 14.

1. The greatest of all mysteries.

“ The Ancient of days,” a new-born Child !

“ The Immense ”—whom no created measure can comprehend or calculate—contained in that narrow manger !

He who is above all creation—as heaven is

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above earth—come down into His own creation.

2. “And dwelt amongst us”—come, not for a moment, but to make His *home* with us.

3. To dwell with us for ever in the Blessed Sacrament.

CONCLUSION.—“Peace on earth to men of good-will.”

We must cultivate the virtues of the season—peace, love, and humility.

We must incline our *wills* to be worthy of His gifts.

VII

OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

INTRODUCTION.—“This is my rest for ever and ever.”—*Ps.* cxxxii. 14.

1. We are celebrating our Lord's coming. Remember He came to stay with us—“oportet me manere”—to bring the peace and sweetness of His home amongst us.

2. From His childhood He sets us the example of obedience. He came to share our poverty, privations, and obligations. “Performed all things according to the law of the Lord.”—*St. Luke* ii. 39.

I. “The Lord whom you seek shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh.”—*Mal.* iii. 1.

1. When presented, as told in this day's Gospel, how His presence filled, sanctified, and glorified the temple of Jerusalem, making it more glorious than that of Solomon. The beginning of that perpetual presence in His temple which He gives us in the Blessed Sacrament.

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2. "He was offered because it was His own will."—*Isa.* liii. 7. Our Lord was presented by His own will—offering the sacrifice of the poor. How great the offering here made, of which the old sacrifices were but types. He offered Himself once for all—His life, His words, actions, and sufferings, and all His Precious Blood. "He was to be the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world"—an offering to be continued in the Mass to the end of the world.

3. With what joy our Lady makes her offering!—gladly uniting her offering to His. What can *we* find to offer in union with the great offering our Lord makes for us?

II. "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles."

How great was the light He came to bring "To them that walked in darkness!" "To them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen."—*Isa.* ix. 2.

1. "A light shining in a dark place."—2 *Peter* i. 19. How dark is this world, in spite of all the lights of human reason! How much we ought to value every ray of God's revelation!

2. A light given not "to the wise and prudent," but "revealed to little ones."—*St. Matt.* xi. 25. Then we ought to distrust our own wisdom, and not "Be more wise than it behoveth to be wise" (*Rom.* xii. 3), but look for that light "Which

Presentation in the Temple

enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.”—*St. John* i. 9.

3. “And the darkness did not comprehend it.” The light of God often seems darkness to this world; “Unto the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness.”—*I Cor.* i. 23.

How different the views given by this light of all things in this world! Do we habitually walk in this light? Do we see all things in this light? “In thy light we shall see light.”—*Ps.* xxxv. 10.

III. “Thine own soul a sword shall pierce.”

1. Our Lord made His offering, and Mary joined her offering to His; but she could not do so without sharing in His suffering; therefore her dolours were now foretold, and the sword’s point presented to her heart.

2. He was to be a “Sign that shall be contradicted,” and we cannot be united to Him without sharing His contradictions.

Have you the spirit of sacrifice? Are you willing to make a sacrifice of your will—to accept the troubles which a Christian may be called on to bear—in union with Christ, as Mary and the saints did? “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”—*2 Tim.*

iii. 12. “I count all things to be but loss.”—

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Phil. iii. 8. Without something of this spirit you cannot join in our Lord's offering.

CONCLUSION.—“ I have chosen to be abject in the house of my God rather than to dwell in the tabernacle of sinners.”—*Ps.* lxxxiii. 11.

How much we should love the Church which our Lord fills with His presence !

How much should we love the Holy Mass where He daily receives this great offering !

How much should we love the Holy Communion when we receive our Lord as holy Simeon did ! “ Nunc dimittis.”

VIII

THE NEW YEAR

INTRODUCTION.—“All things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus.”—*Col.* iii. 17.

The New Year opens with our Lord's Circumcision.

1. To put it under the patronage of His Holy Name.

2. To consecrate it by the first shedding of His blood.

I. “As a vesture thou shalt change them and they shall be changed.”—*Heb.* i. 12.

The New Year reminds us how created things pass, and that God alone is unchangeable, “*im-motus in Te permanens.*”

1. How fast life is passing!—will soon be as the year just gone. How short the road behind us looks; how dark and misty the unknown future.

2. We ought to thank God for favours of past year.

“There is none found to return and give glory to God.”—*St. Luke* xvii. 18.

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Thanks for temporal advantages, kind protection, pleasures enjoyed. Could we have borne our lives without them ?

Thanks, still more, for spiritual blessings bestowed and for those we *might* have had if we had corresponded more fully with grace.

3. We should sorrow for the sins of the year—sins, omissions, ingratitude. “From my hidden sins.”—*Ps.* xviii. 13.

II. “As wise redeeming the time.”—*Eph.* v. 16.

Look forward to the New Year.

1. It is granted for your salvation. “Let it alone this year also.”—*St. Luke* xiii. 8. You can *certainly* save your soul in it.

2. You do not know what it will bring : sorrow and trials perhaps. Its date may be written on your tomb.

3. Enter on it with fear, indeed, but with *hope*, confidence, and resignation.

4. At least begin it in God’s grace, and with a resolution to serve Him well. How important it is to begin well.

III. “He is a debtor to the whole law.”—*Gal.* v. 3.

1. In His Circumcision our Lord took on Himself the whole law : how heavy it was ! and, at His first Blood-shedding, He consecrated

The New Year

Himself to the work of our salvation : Jesus, Saviour.

2. In His tender infancy He pledged Himself to His laborious life and bitter death ; to His agony, His scourging, to His cross : “ because it was His own will.”—*Isa.* liii. 7.

3. He calls on you, at the beginning of the year, to take up His yoke. “ My yoke is sweet and My burden light.”—*St. Matt.* xi. 30.

It is a yoke and a burden : do not forget that.

How very light it is !—how little He asks of you !

From it comes sweetness to all who bear it lovingly. “ In keeping them there is a great reward.”—*Ps.* xviii. 12.

Can you refuse Him when you see Him taking this great burden for you ?

CONCLUSION.—“ There is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved.”—*Acts* iv. 12.

Take the Holy Name as your glory and your watchword, and consecrate this year to His honour.

IX

THE EPIPHANY

INTRODUCTION.—“Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side.”—*Fest. Epiph.*

The concluding Feast of the Nativity. Our Lord still an Infant in the stable; but now *manifested* as a great King; calling His subjects from afar; claiming homage and allegiance. “The government is upon His shoulder.”—*Isa.* ix. 6.

How different its spirit from Christmas night!

I. “There is neither Gentile nor Jew . . . bond nor free.”—*Col.* iii. 11.

It is the feast of the Church’s Catholicity.

1. Our Lord’s Church must embrace all nations. “In thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed” (*Gen.* xii. 3)—“teach all nations.” “Shall rise to rule the Gentiles.”—*Rom.* xv. 12.

2. The great corresponding gift of Catholicity was bestowed on the Church. “Then shalt thou see and abound.” A body, *Catholic*, without ceasing to be *one*; suited to all ages and classes

The Epiphany

of people ; teaching all nations and belonging exclusively to none.

3. "And the veil of the temple was rent in two."—*St. Mark* xv. 38. The wall of separation broken down ; from this time forward there can be no *national* Church ; no Church depending on the civil power. This Catholicity symbolised in the Star of the Epiphany.

II. "Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."—*Ev. Epiph.*

1. Marks the entrance of a new power, which the world hates, and calls divided allegiance, but which is, really, "only giving to Cæsar," etc. A *real* power, not a pretence.

2. "Wonder not if the world hate you."—*1 St. John* iii. 13. Herod had no real reason for hating our Lord, yet he did : so does the world hate the Church. It is, indeed, a tribute to its power, because it is really a kingdom. "Not of this world," but truly a kingdom.

3. "Art thou the King of the Jews ?"—*St. Luke* xxiii. 3. A King even during His Passion. "Jesus Nazareus." So in the Epiphany, calls His subjects, and receives their allegiance. So He calls on us, and we must pay it in spite of the world, as they did.

III. "Thy light is come."

1. The star represents God's grace, "en-

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lightening every man," leading men, sometimes to conversion to the true faith, sometimes to repentance and the practice of piety.

2. The first of all the duties of man is to look out for heavenly light, and follow it through all difficulties—as the Magi did.

3. This light will *never* fail to lead them to our Lord. "Stood over where the Child was."

CONCLUSION.—"Opening their treasures they offered gifts." Make your offerings with them, promising loyalty and obedience to your King, as well as your heart and affections to your God.

X

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY

OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE

INTRODUCTION.—“All that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers.”

This Gospel tells us of our Lord's first teaching—the figure and forerunner of His constant teaching in His Church.

I. “Going up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.”

1. The example of obedience to law. From His earliest years making regularly this long, toilsome journey. Is it much if you are asked to take a short walk to hear Mass?

2. The joy of Mary accompanying Him. How sweet the road to her, hand in hand with her Son! What happiness did His presence diffuse through the whole company! Who would not rejoice to make that journey with Him! When you are called upon to undertake some labour in the practice of religion think

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that you too are going hand in hand with the Child Jesus.

3. How great Mary's distress at losing Him ! It was no fault of hers, yet she "sought Him sorrowing." She could not bear to be separated from Him, and sought Him painfully for three days.

Are you unhappy if anything has separated you from Him ? Any sin ? Any coldness or neglect ?

Do you set out painfully to seek for Him, and refuse to be comforted till you have found Him ?

II. "Son, why hast thou done so to us ?"

1. The firmness with which she spoke to Him. She knew to whom she was speaking, and "laid up His words in her heart"; yet, because He had put Himself under her authority, she did not hesitate to ask for an explanation.

What a rebuke to parents who are too cowardly to call their children to account ; who see them go wrong, and yet indulge them because they will not use the power God has entrusted to them. "Thou hast rather honoured thy sons than Me."—1 *Kings* ii. 29.

2. If our Lord so acted to His Blessed Mother, and His ways were so mysterious, even to her—who, of all creatures, could best comprehend

Our Lord in the Temple

Him—can we be surprised if *we* cannot always understand the ways of His providence ?

3. “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business.” These are our Lord’s first recorded words—the first lesson from His own lips. He had not then begun His ministry, but was entering upon years of patient retirement—yet He would have us know that He was *always* about “His Father’s business.” So must we. Whether at prayer, work, rest, or recreation, we ought always to be able to say, “I am doing God’s work.”

III. “He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them.” The great lesson of our Lord’s early life—subjection.

1. It means not *any* kind of obedience, but submission of heart, judgment, and will—a state of mind and will manifesting itself even in little things.

2. Subject to God in all things. “But be thou, O my soul, subject to God.”—*Ps.* lxi. 6. “It is the Lord; let Him do what is good in His sight.”—*1 Kings* iii. 18. Subject to the commands of God, and to the providence of God, even when it sends painful things. “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away.”—*Job* i. 21.

3. Likewise submission to creatures for God’s sake. Without this, submission to God Himself

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is only a pretence and delusion. “Be ye subject to every creature for God’s sake.”—1 *St. Peter* ii. 13. “Be subject one to another in the fear of Christ.”—*Eph.* v. 21. *Subject* to the Church ; to civil authorities ; to earthly masters, so far as their lawful authority extends.

4. “Advanced in wisdom, age, and grace.” Our Lord teaches us that we must make progress, since it is the very condition of this life. Even He, the Wisdom of the Father, seemed to grow, that He might lead us on step by step.

CONCLUSION.—“The Lord is in His holy temple.”—*Ps.* x. 5. In all troubles let us seek Him there ; we, too, shall be “astonished at His wisdom and His answers” ; and, like Mary, let us “keep all these words in our hearts.”

XI

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

THE HOLY NAME

INTRODUCTION.—“Thy Name is called upon us, O Lord ; forsake us not.”—*Jer.* xiv. 9. As soon as Christmas is finished, the Church returns to dwell reverently, lovingly, and confidently on the Name of Jesus, taken at the Circumcision.

It is indeed our only title to consideration with God. “What is man that thou art mindful of him ? ”—*Ps.* viii. 5.

I. “In the Name of Jesus let every knee bow.”—*Phil.* ii. 10.

I. How great the reverence due to that Name, “Which was called by the Angel before He was conceived in the womb.”—*St. Luke* ii. 21.

A Name given by God Himself.

A Name meaning nothing less than “God and Man,” since none other could be the Saviour of men.

A Name expressing the beneficent counsels

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of God to men. "Blessed be the holy Name of Thy glory."—*Dan.* iii. 52. "Blessed be the Name of the Lord."—*Ps.* cxii. 2.

2. How great the gratitude due for the favours and love shown to us under this Name! "For He shall save His people from their sins."—*St. Matt.* i. 21. What tenderness, suffering, prodigality of love this Name suggests to us!

3. What external reverence all Christians should show to it—bowing their heads, using it always carefully, reverentially, and lovingly, and making it a sort of act of faith and love.

4. How indignant should we be at any disrespect, levity, or roughness in using this most holy Name! It ought to be like a personal affront to ourselves. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me."—*Ps.* lxviii. 10.

II. "How admirable is Thy Name."—*Ps.* viii. 2.

1. It is a Name of power. "In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk."—*Acts* iii. 6. "Unde putas tanta lux?"—*Lect.* iv. *festi.*

2. A Name of sweetness. "Thy Name is as oil poured out."—*Cant.* i. 2.

3. A Name of hope. "If you shall ask," etc.—*St. John* xiv. 14. "There is no other

The Holy Name

Name.”—*Acts* iv. 12. “Our hope when we repent.”—*St. Bernard*.

4. Rejoice in this Name. Be proud to think it was invoked over you in childhood ; that in it you will go forth to judgment and find safety. “Exultabo in Deo Jesu meo” (*Heb.* iii. 18), and at the same time “fear His glorious and terrible Name.”—*Deut.* xxviii. 58.

III. “All things do ye in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—*Col.* iii. 17.

1. Take it as your watchword ; the standard of the cross, and the watchword of the Holy Name ; “Jesus Nazarenus Rex.”

2. Your defence against your enemies, “Who-soever shall call upon the Name of the Lord” (*Acts* ii. 21) in time of temptation.

3. Use it as the sword of the spirit when you go forth to attack spiritual enemies.

4. To give value to all you do ; to obtain patience and joy in suffering. “And they went, rejoicing to suffer reproach for the Name of Jesus.”—*Acts* v. 41.

CONCLUSION.—“Not to us, O Lord, but to Thy Name give glory.”—*Ps.* cxiii. 9. Try to live worthy of the great Name in which you were redeemed, and in all you do to give honour to the Name of Jesus.

XII

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

CONFESSION

INTRODUCTION.—“Go show thyself to the priest.”

This suggests the sacrament of Penance. A sacrament of daily life, which we may use as often as we please. If we use it badly we poison the *springs* of spiritual life. Its use admits of many degrees of perfection; very few use it as they ought.

I. “Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them.”—*St. John* xx. 23.

1. “The forgiveness of sins,” in the Creed, leads us to expect some *special* provision for pardon in the New Law—not merely forgiveness in general.

2. The duty of confession comes from the power our Lord gave to His Apostles. He thereby made them judges, and being a judge implies power to *hear* the cause.

Confession

3. The solemnity of confession is, that it is a rehearsal of our Lord's Judgment; "solus cum solo," the same judge, the same criminal; but *now* a judgment of mercy, *then* of retribution. Raise your eyes from the humble confessional here to His awful judgment seat.

He allows us to anticipate His sentence.

II. "If we judged ourselves we should not be judged."—1 *Cor.* xi. 31. Our Lord has appointed us to be accusers and witnesses, as well as criminals; therefore

1. We must *act* as accusers, and not as excusers. "I said I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord."—*Ps.* xxxi. 5.

2. Take all reasonable pains to know our sins.

3. Tell, at least, all mortal sins, and the circumstances which change the nature of the sin.

If you wilfully leave out a mortal sin you are telling a lie to the Holy Ghost—"Thou hast not lied to men but to God" (*Acts* v. 4)—a lie in all its *circumstances*, just such as Ananias told: if you tell small things, and leave out great ones, it is detestable hypocrisy—acting like Saul.—1 *Kings* xv. 9.

4. Take care to have real sorrow for the past, and the purpose of amendment.

III. "Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause."—*Ps.* xlii. 1. What dispositions should

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we have to ask for this *distinction*, this favourable judgment ?

1. Humility before God and His minister. "I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes."—*Job* xlii. 6.

2. Openness, telling *all* sins, and circumstances necessary for a full manifestation of conscience, as far as may be without scrupulosity, "Despising the shame" (*Heb.* xii. 2), as our Lord did for us.

3. Labouring to attack the faults from which actual sins come, and meaning to profit by good advice received.

4. Anxiety to get a great sorrow, and make a perfect atonement. "With many tears let us beg His pardon."—*Judith* viii. 14. "I restore him fourfold."—*St. Luke* xix. 8. Desire to do as *much* as possible.

CONCLUSION.—"Thy wrath is turned away and Thou hast comforted me."—*Isa.* xii. 1. The comfort of a really good and earnest confession. "Salvation is come to this house." "Jesu spes pœnitentibus."

XIII

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

CONSCIENCE

INTRODUCTION.—“Who show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them.”—*Rom.* ii. 15.

The first step to the pardon of sins is examination of conscience : how repent without knowing ?

Hence the prodigal “returns to himself” (*St. Luke* xv. 17)—investigates his own conscience before returning to his father.

The Sacrament of Penance makes examination of conscience obligatory, because there can be no real confession without it, and self-examination is *generally* followed by sorrow.

I. “These having not the law are a law to themselves.”—*Rom.* ii. 14.

1. Conscience is the *primary* witness to God within us : our primary *law, guide, and accuser* : through which *all* other laws must act.

2. It is practically, at the moment when it

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speaks, the voice of God, the highest of all sanctions, and must *always* be obeyed.

3. It is *always* a sin to go against your conscience ; but you may, and are sometimes bound to, go against what *seems* to be conscience—*i.e.* when a *higher* conscience tells you it is only a phantom, what you ought to disregard. In case of scrupulous people, for instance.

4. A religious man is one who carefully follows conscience—makes it “a lamp to his feet” (*Ps.* cxviii. 105) ; “as the eyes of the servant are on the hands of their masters.”—*Ps.* cxxii. 2.

5. No one has a right to tamper with his own conscience or that of another.

II. “If the light within thee be darkness,” etc.—*St. Matt.* vi. 23.

1. Not enough to *follow* conscience ; one must enlighten it.

A “law,” but one which wants *much* elucidating.

If it were infallible we should need no other law, whereas “on His law he shall meditate,” etc.—*Ps.* i. 2. The world full of the *mistakes* of conscience.

2. These mistakes do not always excuse—*e.g.* when the Jews rejected our Lord : “If they had known it they would never,” etc.—*1 Cor.*

Conscience

ii. 8. "Will think that he doth a service to God."
—*St. John* xvi. 2. Conscience, like the compass of a ship, to be followed but also watched and corrected—as it may be *false*, and then leads to shipwreck.

3. How are we to correct it? God has given us *reason*, *revelation*, and *authority* to help us. "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles," because "they were sitting in darkness."

III. "I am not concious to myself of anything, yet am I not hereby justified."—*1 Cor.* iv. 4.

We must be on our guard therefore against

1. An erroneous conscience, perverted by the teaching of men, by prejudice, calling wrong right; or, on the other hand, *inventing* sins. Some, for instance, make a sin of every less perfect action, or violation of self-imposed obligations.

2. A hardened conscience: "Having their conscience seared."—*1 Tim.* iv. 2. Neglect of the warnings of conscience easily leads to this.

3. A *half* conscience—*i.e.* a conscience very sensitive on some points and very indifferent on others. Some, for instance, are very conscientious as to their duties to God, but do not scruple at being false, uncharitable, or unjust to their neighbours; or, it may be, and often is.

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the other way. Whereas “he who offends in one point is guilty of all.”—*St. James* ii. 10.

CONCLUSION.—“Thy word is a lamp to my feet.”—*Ps.* cxviii. 105.

Let conscience be always your guide, and you will not go astray.

XIV

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

BAD HABITS

INTRODUCTION.—“What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard?”—*Isa.* v. 4.

The parable is a picture of the Church; we are all plants “growing till the harvest”—planted by a good Master, protected by Him, watched over by His angels.

Yet evil grows up in the Church. The angels say: “How long, O Lord, holy and true”—(*Ap.* vi. 10)—“wilt thou that we gather up?” Evil grows up in the hearts of men, and the angels grieve; if there is “joy before the angels” so is there sorrow. But the Lord says: “Suffer both to grow.”

I. “He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.”—*Ecclus.* xix. 1.

1. How small the beginnings of evil—the weeds not perceptible at first till “the blade was springing up.” So vices appear unimportant or even *good*, in the beginning.

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A drunkard, for instance. How trifling small excesses appeared at first—a mere joke. So with little dishonesties, with trifling lies. Who would have thought they would have produced such results? The apostate from his faith neglected prayer a *little*, tampered with his faith a *little*, was a little ashamed of it, but never meant to turn away from God altogether.

2. “Whilst men were asleep”: they never dreamed of the harm when evil began. But evil habits are a terrible power against which we must guard. Things easily resisted at first become almost irresistible.

3. “Principiis obsta.” Necessity of watching against the evil habits, the beginnings of bad companies, etc. Think not what a thing is in *itself*, but what it may grow to be.

II. “Say not: I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me?—for the Most High is a patient rewarder.”—*Ecclus.* v. 4.

1. Sinners become bold by impunity, thinking themselves safe because not at once “gathered up,” just as the poppies in the field look finer than the corn, but their time will surely come. “I passed by, and lo! he was not.”—*Ps.* xxxvi. 36.

2. Each sin does not give additional security, but brings punishment nearer. “Fill ye up the measure.”—*St. Matt.* xxiii. 32.

Bad Habits

3. Men are impatient and would strike ; God is patient, but to the impenitent His patience is the most terrible of His judgments. “ Despisest thou the riches of His patience ? ”—*Rom. ii. 4.*

III. “ Bind it into bundles to burn.”

1. Terrible the separation of the good and the bad ; in each congregation, in each family ; some, alas ! cast out into “ exterior darkness.” “ He shall gather His elect.”—*St. Mark xiii. 27.* Glorious for the good, terrible for the wicked.

2. Separation of *good* from *evil*. Now, mixed ; even *worst* have *some* good ; how terrible will the evil be when *all* good is withdrawn !—how insupportable a burden to the wicked !

CONCLUSION.—“ You are called in one body.”—*Ep. cur.*

God will not separate the good from the bad now, because He “ does not desire the death of the wicked ” (*Ez. xxxiii. 11*), and wills us all to remain in one body ; therefore,

1. We should have compassion on sinners : “ Compassion on thy fellow-servant.”—*St. Matt. xviii. 33.*

2. “ Bearing with one another ” because even the worst may one day be united to us in God’s kingdom.

XV

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

RELIGION IN DAILY LIFE

INTRODUCTION.—“The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven.”

The Kingdom of Heaven means (1) Heaven, (2) Church on earth, (3) God's grace within us. We pray for all these in “Thy Kingdom come.”

Take the last meaning. Religion must affect, pervade, flavour the life of a Christian like leaven.

I. “The Kingdom of God is within you.”—*St. Luke xvii. 21.*

1. The essential part of religion is in your heart. “From the heart come,” etc.—*St. Matt. xv. 19.* “Son, give me thy heart.”—*Prov. xxiii. 26.*

External virtues only, are like “sounding brass” (1 *Cor. xiii. 1*); those who have them, like “whited sepulchres” (*St. Matt. xxiii. 27*), if not accompanied by inward purity.

Religion in Daily Life

2. Grace must pervade and subjugate the *whole* interior.

The understanding must be “brought into captivity” (2 *Cor.* x. 5) by reverence, diffidence, humility. “With the whole understanding.”—*St. Mark* xii. 33.

The imagination, by habit of realising the things of faith “in my meditation.”—*Ps.* xxxviii. 4.

The desires—“*cogitanti omnia vilescunt.*”

The affections: “Since He first loved us.”—1 *St. John* iv. 10.

Is religion pervading your *whole* interior? Are you trying to make it?

II. “All the glory of the King’s daughter is within—in golden borders,” etc.—*Ps.* xliv. 14.

Religion must be within—but must show itself outwardly—otherwise (1) it is not to be trusted, (2) it perishes—like roots not producing leaves.

1. Not enough to be religious in church and at prayer, but religious in *work*, in *recreation*, in *social intercourse*. Do *all* for God. “Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” (*St. Luke* ii. 49) however employed.

2. Show your religion in the duties of your state. Your state of life the ladder by which

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you are to get to heaven. Reverence and love it.

3. Also, in your families, to your husbands, wives, children, and servants. Do *they* feel the effect of your religion ?

III. "That they may see your good works."
—*St. Matt.* v. 16.

1. Men expect much from Christians, and are scandalised if they do not find it—often unreasonably. Christians are not *necessarily* very wise, very pleasant, and so forth.

2. But *some* things they have a *right* to ask of us.

"By their fruits shall ye know them."—*St. Matt.* vii. 16.

(a) *Conscientiousness*—honesty in business, in employment of time ; uprightnes and straightforwardness.

(b) *Charity*—a forgiving, charitable spirit. The leaven of religion *must* produce these qualities, if really there.

CONCLUSION.—"Like a grain of mustard seed." We cannot expect things to come at once ; but are they coming ?

Are we *growing* in grace ?

Is religion more and more *leavening* our lives, "till the whole is leavened."

XVI

SEPTUAGESIMA

WORKING IN THE VINEYARD

INTRODUCTION.—“Why stand you here all the day idle?”

A reproach which may be addressed to very many; to those who have never thought what God wants of them in this life; to those who do no work at all; to those who do their work slothfully; to those who are “troubled about many things” and forget the “one thing necessary.”

I. “Go you also into My vineyard.”

1. God has called *all* to work. None to be idle, in whatever position they may be. He has called on us many times—early, at the sixth, and ninth, and eleventh, hours. He has repeated His call. Dare anyone say: “No man hath hired us”?

2. Many kinds of work, some higher, some lower in sight of men; but all necessary, all for the same Master, all equally honourable, and

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all receiving the same reward. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things."

3. Each one has the duties of his state of life; duties to his own family, to those around him, which together make up the corner of the vineyard assigned to him.

4. Each has the field of his own heart, which he must keep clean and fertile, and which he only can cultivate.

II. "He is not crowned unless he strive lawfully."—2 *Tim.* ii. 5. *Striving lawfully* means,

1. Working *steadily*, not by fits and starts—that is, playing, like children, not working.

2. Using all your talents, honestly employing all your faculties; *five talents*, if those are given you; *two*, if only two have been given.

3. Working according to your Master's instructions, not your own way, or by your own caprice.

4. Honestly intending to serve Him, and referring all to Him. Those who work for themselves "have received their reward."—*St. Matt.* vi. 5.

III. "Redeeming the time."—*Eph.* v. 16.

1. Sad to think of hours wasted; perhaps "the day is far spent" (*St. Luke* xxiv. 29) perhaps the end is in sight.

Working in the Vineyard

2. Comfort that we can still make up, and gain the same reward as others, not from our deserts, but His liberality; “not of him that runneth,” etc.—*Rom.* ix. 16.

3. The least we can do to redeem the time is to meet His generosity *generously*, to begin *at once*, and to make the very best use of time remaining.

CONCLUSION.—“Make your calling and election sure.”—2 *St. Peter* i. 10. You certainly have been called many times, but so were the people of Israel; “Were all under a cloud,” etc.—*Ep. cur.* Prepare well for holy time of Lent, and labour hard, and your labour for Him will not be in vain.

XVII

SEXAGESIMA

FOUNDATIONS

INTRODUCTION.—“The seed is the Word of God.”

1. *All* good comes from this good seed ; the word is in our ears, and hearts ; we must hear diligently. “Receive in thy heart, and hear with thy ears.”—*Ez.* iii. 10.

2. The seed is capable of growth, like the “grain of mustard seed,” “unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.”—*Eph.* iv. 13. Consider the conditions for growth.

I. “It had no roots.”

1. Religion often superficial ; rooted in the *exterior* of the mind ; depending on human respect or liking, on temporal advantages, on personal tastes, etc. Can we be surprised if it wither in the hot sun ?

2. “The end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”—1 *St. Peter* i. 9.

Foundations

It ought to be rooted by

(a) reflection.

(b) sense of duty and responsibility.

(c) fear ; “beginning of wisdom” ; my religion means to *me* salvation or damnation, nothing less.

(d) seeking after God for Himself.

“My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God” (*Ps.* xli. 3), and for those rewards He has proposed. “For the reward” (*Ps.* cxviii. 112)—“the desirable land.”—*Ps.* cv. 24.

Is your religion rooted in these feelings, or is it a matter of taste and whim and human respect ?

II. “Rooted and founded in charity.”—*Eph.* iii. 17.

1. There can be no real roots without the love of God. If you do not love God and try to love Him more you “have no roots.” All other dispositions without this are insufficient. “If I have all faith,” etc.—*1 Cor.* xiii. 2.

2. “That you may be able to comprehend the breadth and depth.”—*Eph.* iii. 18. Religion must be dried up, superficial, and unfruitful, without charity.

3. “Charity beareth all things . . . endureth all things . . . never falleth away”

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(1 *Cor.* xiii. 7), whereas those who have no roots “are scandalised.”—*St. Mark* iv. 17. The world is full of scandals, trials, and disappointments, and only those “rooted in charity” can bear up against them. If your religion rests on the love of God nothing that men can do will scandalise you.

III. “A tree planted by the waters spreadeth out its roots to the moisture.”—*Jer.* xvii. 8.

1. We are trees “planted by the waters”: “He hath brought me up on the waters of refreshment.”—*Ps.* xxii. 2. What abundant supplies has our Lord provided! It is entirely our own fault and misfortune if we allow the roots to dry up and the tree to wither; we must “spread out to the moisture.”

2. The springs we must use are *meditation and spiritual reading*. “With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.”—*Jer.* xii. 11.

3. It is necessary to have by *prayer and the Sacraments* constant recourse to our Lord; “thou wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water.”—*St. John* iv. 10.

CONCLUSION.—“Let it alone this year also until I dig about it.”—*St. Luke* xiii. 8.

If your religion has not struck deep roots in

Foundations

your heart, and these roots do not grow, it is your own fault, and a great peril.

Perhaps our Lord is leaving you here a little longer to give you one more chance of striking deeper roots.

XVIII

QUINQUAGESIMA

LIGHT

INTRODUCTION.—“Lord, that I may see.”

Consider the earnestness and perseverance of the blind man in the Gospel. His petition for *mercy*, and especially for *light*.

I. “Enlighten my eyes that I may never sleep in death.”—*Ps.* xii. 4.

Light is our great need in this life, where we are all “in darkness and in the shadow of death.”—*Ps.* cvi. 10.

I. How many *never* see “the things that are to their peace,” but call evil good; seek after vanities; follow “the desires of their own hearts” (*Ps.* lxxx. 13); follow opinions and fashions of the world, “heaping to themselves teachers.”—2 *Tim.* iv. 3.

2. Who never “open their eyes to consider the wonders of God’s law” (*Ps.* cxviii. 18), to whom the most sacred and beautiful things in religion are a blank.

3. We want to know our sins—a servant

Light

owing "ten thousand talents." "I am not conscious, yet am I not hereby justified."—*1 Cor.* iv. 4. How few rightly estimate their indebtedness—how easily men forget their sins. See how little people do to *pay* their debt.

4. "That I may know what is wanting to me."—*Ps.* xxxviii. 5.

5. Have we reached the perfection God wants of us? "Lest any man be wanting to the grace of God."—*Heb.* xii. 15.

II. "A light that shineth in a dark place."—*2 St. Peter* i. 19.

1. This world is a dark place, and the only true light is faith. Science tells us many things, but nothing "to our peace." What real light comes from all its discoveries?

2. "We see now through a glass in a dark manner" (*1. Cor.* xiii. 12)—*i.e.* not telling us all we want to know, but sufficient, for it is our own fault if we do not make it "a lamp to our feet."—*Ps.* cxviii. 105. We must cultivate that light by which "God hath shined in our hearts."—*2 Cor.* iv. 6.

3. But this light absolutely requires love and humility, since God "has revealed to little ones."—*St. Luke* x. 21.

III. "Come ye to Him and be enlightened."—*Ps.* xxxiii. 6.

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1. Like the man in the Gospel, all our light must come to us from our Lord—He is “the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.”—*St. John* i. 9. He was the “Light to the revelation of the Gentiles,” and we come to Him by thought and prayer.

2. But it must be with an earnest *desire* to see the light; “Lord, that I may see.” Many remain blind because “they love darkness rather than light.”—*St. John* iii. 19.

3. They must intend to *follow* the light. Many fail to see the light because, though they pretend to *look*, they have no idea of following. In faith how many *play* with the light, but never receive it fully, because they don't mean to *follow* it farther than convenient. So of morals also. “A good understanding to all that do it.”—*Ps.* cx. 10. If you do not *wish* to be good, why should our Lord show you the way?

CONCLUSION.—“*Accende lumen sensibus.*” The Holy Ghost was sent by our Lord to enlighten us; to Him we must constantly apply, but ask for *love* as well as *light*. “*Infunde amorem cordibus.*” The Holy Spirit came in tongues of fire, and light and heat go together in spiritual as well as earthly things.

XIX

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

TEMPTATION

INTRODUCTION.—“Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”

1. A wonderful condescension—to allow the devil to come into His presence and insult Him by such suggestions.

2. The first lesson of his public ministry was how to fight against temptation. “Ut sic tentationes nostras suis vinceret,” etc.—*St. Greg. lect. viii.*

I. “It was necessary that temptation should prove thee.”—*Tob. xii. 13.*

1. This is our trial time; we *must* be tempted. No state, however holy, no knowledge, no piety can exempt us. The bravest, wisest, and holiest have been tempted—David, Solomon, and all the saints in turn. Therefore,

2. We must not be surprised or disheartened by temptation. If the devil presumed to tempt our Lord will he spare us?

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3. No temptation, however bad, is a sin in itself, as our Lord's example shows. On the contrary, "Virtue is made perfect in infirmity."
—2 *Cor.* xii. 9.

4. "Whom resist ye strong in faith."—1 *St. Peter* v. 9.

Our business here is to be *prudent* in preparing for temptation, and *brave* in resisting it.

II. "The concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."
—1 *St. John* ii. 16.

Our Lord's temptation points out our own principal dangers.

1. *Over solicitude*—fear of wanting necessaries of life. How many neglect God from this fear! "Be not solicitous for your life."—*St. Matt.* vi. 25. "Not in bread alone."

2. *Over confidence*—self-worship, belief in yourself, tempting God by neglecting means and running into dangers. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

3. *Carnal desires*—worshipping the good things of this world: its power, riches, and pleasures. "Covetousness, which is a serving of idols."—*Eph.* v. 5. The remedy: "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore."

III. "Let no temptation take hold on you but such as is human."—1 *Cor.* x. 13.

Temptation

1. Three stages of temptation—suggestion, delectation, and consent. The first is *human*—*i.e.* belonging to our condition; we cannot help it, but we *need* not let it *enter in* by stopping to consider it; “that ye enter not into temptation.”—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 41.

2. God will “make with temptation issue.”—*1 Cor.* x. 13. His grace is always ready to help you. “My grace is sufficient for thee.”—*2 Cor.* xii. 2. But you must call on Him or you will fail. “Call upon Me in the time of trouble.”—*Psa.* xlix. 15.

3. “Will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.”—*1 Cor.* x. 12. Be confident that you always *can* resist temptation, however violent. If you allow yourself to *doubt* this, you are in great danger.

CONCLUSION.—“When he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life.”—*St. James* i. 12.

Every temptation bravely resisted is a great gain, a victory. Place yourself beside our Lord in time of temptation, and fight bravely with Him.

XX

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

HOLY EUCHARIST

INTRODUCTION.—“He was transfigured before them.”

Marvellous scene on Mount Thabor: our Lord allowing the Apostles one glimpse of the “glory as of the only begotten Son,” not as by a miracle, but as if by relaxing, for a moment, His disguise. What an effect on His Apostles!

He, their companion, friend, and servant, suddenly shown as the Master whom all things obey, humbly waited on by Moses and Elias. They became as dead men, and ever remembered “The voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory.”—2 *Peter* i. 17.

Let us apply this to the Holy Eucharist.

I. “There hath stood One in the midst of you whom ye know not.”—*St. John* i. 26.

We are familiar with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. He is to us, also, our companion,

Holy Eucharist

friend, and, in some sort, our servant: if we could see Him for a moment “not in a glass darkly,” but “face to face.”—*I Cor.* xiii. 12.

1. How wonderful in Himself! “God of God, Light of Light,” in whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally.”—*Col.* ii. 9. “The Lamb slain from the beginning of the world.”—*Apoc.* xiii. 8.

2. How wonderful

in the *manner* of His presence,
in His glorified body—in this world and
not of it.

Sharing the poverty and trials of His people
—yet quite above all its casualties.

Present *miraculously* — corporally present
yet filling no space—“*tantum
esse sub fragmento.*”

The “hidden Deity” neglected by men and
adored by angels.

3. How wonderful in His work!

“My Father worketh until now and I work.”
—*St. John* v. 17. “Always living to make
intercession for us.”—*Heb.* vii. 25. Always
ready “to seek and to save that which was lost.”
—*St. Luke* xix. 10. Truly “He hath made a
remembrance of His wonderful works. . . .
He hath given food to them that fear Him.”
Ps. cx. 4.

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II. "My delight is to be with the children of men."—*Prov.* viii. 31.

Why has our Lord accomplished these wonders ?
To carry out the work of the Incarnation.

1. He was incarnate because His creation needed His presence. "He bowed the heavens and came down" (*Ps.* xvii. 10) that, more effectually and immediately, He might be in the midst of it. So He remains, because "Without Me you can do nothing."—*St. John* xv. 5.

2. That He might receive adoration, praise, and acts of homage from the poor. The adoration of His angels was not enough. Praise must be "Perfected out of the mouths of infants."—*Ps.* viii. 3.

3. That He might "Raise up the needy from the earth" (*Ps.* cxii. 7), and "fill the hungry with good things."—*St. Luke* i. 53.

III. "He is the Lord thy God and Him shall they adore."—*Ps.* xlv. 12.

1. Wherever He is, He is infinitely adorable—in the stable, on the cross, on the altar. "When He bringeth in the first begotten, let all the angels of God adore Him."—*Heb.* i. 6. They "fell down before the Lamb," etc.—*Apoc.* v. 8.

2. This adoration must be full of "fear, devotion, reverence, and love"; they "fell upon their faces and were much afraid."

Holy Eucharist

3. Is our adoration like this?—*exteriorly*? —*interiorly*? Do we give time enough? Is it respectful enough? Is it tender enough?

CONCLUSION.—“Let us make three tabernacles.”—*St. Mark* ix. 4. “Venite, exultemus—jubilemus—procidamus—plorems.”

Try to see our Lord on the altar transfigured before us. “Ut te revelata cernens facie, visu sim beatus tuæ gloriæ.”

XXI

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE MASS

INTRODUCTION.—“Christ also hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God.”—*Ep. cur.*

Holy Mass is the highest of all worship. Hearing Mass regularly and devoutly on appointed days may be called the backbone of a religious life.

I. “The Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world.”—*Apoc.* xiii. 8.

1. Sacrifice, a higher worship than prayer, was known from the beginning, by instinct or primeval tradition; Abel, Noe, Abraham; “The Lord smelled a sweet savour.”—*Gen.* viii. 21.

2. These were only methods by which the Great Sacrifice might be represented, or *made present*, to all ages: that was necessary, because, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.”—*Heb.* ix. 22.

“Quid ais Moyses? . . . Dominici san-

The Mass

guinis demonstratur exemplum.”—*Fest. Pret. Sang. lect. iv.*

3. The sacrifice of Calvary is made present to us by the Holy Mass in a more perfect way, as was to be expected, being at once the *memorial* and *renewal* of the same sacrifice, so that our Lord is the Lamb “standing, as it were, slain” from the beginning till the end of creation.

II. “Do this in commemoration of Me.”

Our Lord, in the Mass, calls to mind, and repeats all the wonders of His life on earth.

1. He comes silently, as on Christmas night, adored by so few, surrounded by His angels. “Dum medium silentium.”—*Dom. Oct. Nat.* He continues the life of Nazareth.

2. He renews the Sacrifice of Calvary, inviting us to the foot of the cross, drawing us to Him. “If I am lifted up,” etc.

3. Gives us His glorified Body, with those wonderful properties with which It rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.

Let us offer therefore, “memores . . . passionis, necnon et ab inferis resurrectionis.”

III. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example.”—*1 St. Peter ii. 21.*

Example of,

1. Humility, patience, obedience, “exinanivit se.” He has come again “Not to be ministered

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unto, but to minister.”—*St. Matt.* xx. 28. To be servant to men, sacrifice to God.

2. Constant self-sacrifice; everywhere the Cross—on the altar, the vestments, etc. “Standing, as it were, slain.”

3. Always mindful of your salvation and interceding. “Always living to make intercession.”—*Heb.* vii. 25.

4. Always calling on us to make at least some sacrifice.

CONCLUSION.—“Who shall ascend to the mountain of the Lord?”—*Ps.* xxiii. 3.

We ought to hear Mass
with humble adoration,
with generosity and love,
with earnestness and preparation of mind,
“innocent of hands and clean of heart.”

XXII

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

HOLY COMMUNION

INTRODUCTION.—“I have compassion on the multitude.”—*St. Matt.* xv. 32.

A miracle illustrating the Blessed Sacrament as the food of our souls.

The multiplication of the bread—the figure of the Holy Eucharist; “sumit unus, sumunt mille.”

Given for the same cause, “lest they faint in the way.”

At this season all have to consider the obligation of receiving Holy Communion.

I. “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer.”—*St. Luke* xxii. 15.

1. He shows His desire by His love in instituting the Blessed Sacrament, and by His urgent commands to us, “except you eat,” “abideth in Me,” “I will raise him up.”—*St. John* vi.

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2. The Church re-echoes His words, and fixes this time in the strictest way.

3. The obligation of Easter Communion *remains* in force till it has been complied with. Even when the appointed time is past, the obligation of receiving as soon as possible remains.

4. Whoever neglects Easter Communion rejects our Lord's friendship, rebels against the Church, cutting himself off from her communion. "Let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican" (*St. Matt.* xviii. 17); and "hateth his own soul."—*Ps.* x. 6.

II. "How camest thou in hither not having on the wedding garment?"—*St. Matt.* xxii. 12.

1. Our Lord does not reserve His invitation for saints. No excuse to say you are sinners. He *wants* sinners. He wants *you*—"to save that which was lost."—*St. Matt.* xviii. 11.

2. Not only invited, but, at this season, He *compels* you by His commands, like the poor and feeble in the parable. "Compel them to come in."—*St. Luke* xiv. 23.

3. All He requires is that you should be ready to receive again "the first robe."—*St. Luke.* xv. 22. He is as ready to give to you as was the father of the prodigal. That is the *essential* condition. Is it too hard?—to lay aside mortal

Holy Communion

sin?—to become once more His friend and His child?

III. "This day I must abide in thy house."
—*St. Luke* xix. 5.

1. Our Lord did not come for a moment, but to remain, "abideth in Me." "We will come to Him and make our abode with Him."
—*St. John* xiv. 23. It is our own fault if He ever leaves us. "Mane nobiscum Domine."

2. He does not come with His hands empty, leaving nothing behind. "I have sanctified this house."—3 *Kings* ix. 3. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried."—*Apoc.* iii. 18.

3. Like Zacheus, you must
 cleanse your house,
 put your best before Him,
 offer your best resolutions.

"If I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."—*St. Luke* xix. 8.

CONCLUSION.—"Salvation is come to this house." Holy Communion is meant for the salvation of your soul, and is the direct and sufficient means for it. "He is also a son of Abraham." Our Lord *wills* your salvation, that you should "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."—*St. Matt.* viii. 11.

XXIII

PASSION SUNDAY

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

INTRODUCTION.—“Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example.”—1 *St. Peter* ii. 21.

1. The Passion is the *necessary* devotion of all Christians.

2. We must be followers of Christ to Calvary, as well as to Mount Thabor. “I am ready to go with Thee both into prison and unto death.”—*St. Luke* xxii. 33.

3. Follow in the right spirit. Many followed whose hearts were far from Him.

I. “He was offered because it was His own will.”—*Isa.* liii. 7. The agony was the epitome or rehearsal of His Passion, and shows,

1. He suffered by His own will—He entered on it by His own act. “I lay down My life that I may take it up again; no man taketh it away from Me.”—*St. John* x. 17. “Thou wouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above.”—*St. John* xix. 11.

The Agony in the Garden

2. Every detail, every deed or word against Him was by His own deliberate permission.

3. He not only permitted, but thirsted for suffering—"desiderio desideravi."—*St. Luke* xxii. 15.

4. He willed so much to arouse corresponding generosity in us. "I came to cast fire."—*St. Luke* xii. 49.

II. "My soul is sorrowful even unto death."—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 38. He condescends to open His soul to us that we may see,

1. That He was like to us "in all but sin," and suffered as we should do.

2. That He felt fear, disgust, weariness, and despondency—that the chalice of sin and suffering was most horrible to Him—that He felt the pain, ignominy, and guilt which He had taken on Himself. See His actions—listen to His words: "factus in agonia prolixius orabat."—*St. Luke* xxii. 43. "Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo."—*Ps.* xxix. 10.

3. He meant to show us how to meet sorrow—alone, not relying on human help, but trusting to prayer.

4. To teach us how to sorrow for sin. How great His sorrow—how slight ours!

III. "Not My will but Thine be done."—*St. Luke* xxii. 42.

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1. The necessity of doing God's will—all religion consists in this. However strong our feelings and wishes, however earnest our prayers, it must be our *will* that God's will may be done, and not ours.

2. This is quite consistent with repugnance, pain, and the rebellion of the sinner. If our *will* is right it is no matter even if our feelings resist. We can never feel such repugnance as the Sacred Humanity did during the agony.

CONCLUSION.—“Arise, let us go.”—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 46.

Our Lord desires that we should sympathise with Him, and join with Him in His prayer : “Could you not watch with Me for one hour ?” If we do, He will give us the courage to go out bravely to the battle when the time comes.

XXIV

PALM SUNDAY

ENTERING JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION.—“Hosanna to the Son of David.” To-day, in a sense, begins our Lord’s Passion.

1. The Victim of the Great Sacrifice is solemnly brought to Jerusalem. For how many ages had the Paschal Sacrifice been offered, in anticipation of *this* Sacrifice, from which alone it had its value !

2. Bearing our sins. On whom “the Lord hath laid the iniquity of us all.”—*Isa.* liii. 6.

3. The rejoicing crowds cry “Hosanna !” so soon to be changed to “Crucifige !” How small the value of mere sentiment, if not backed up by principle. Always plenty ready to cry “Hosanna !” What do *our* words mean ?

I. “He went forth conquering, to conquer.”—*Ap.* vi. 2.

1. Our Lord came to offer sacrifice, to “enter into the Holies” (*Heb.* ix. 12), “conquering and

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to conquer," and the palm branch of victory is borne before Him.

2. The martyrs have their palms when the battle is *done*, but our Lord claims it when He *begins* the fight, for He *must* win.

3. You take in your hands the symbol of His victory : are you honestly fighting for and with Him ? How can cowards and traitors dare to touch His palm of victory ? If you had seen Judas carrying a palm, and crying "Hosanna !"

4. When you honestly fight with Christ your victory is secured, as His was. "I have overcome the world."—*St. John* xvi. 33. This holy time specially the time for fighting for our Lord.

II. "Behold thy King cometh to thee meek."—*St. Matt.* xxi. 5.

1. How humble and lowly His triumph ! before whom angels tremble. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him, justice and judgments are the establishment of His throne : a fire shall go before Him and shall burn His enemies round about" (*Ps.* xcvi. 2), and this Lord is contented with the homage of the poor and the praises of little ones—"ex ore infantium." "Pueri Hebræorum."

2. How sad His triumph, bearing the weight of His sufferings and our sins ; hearing the

Entering Jerusalem

“Crucifige,” as well as the “Hosanna”; seeing the fickleness and faint-heartedness of His people through their momentary enthusiasm.

3. Passing through those very streets through which He was so soon to be dragged by a multitude with “swords and clubs.”

III. “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”

The sadness of the Passion, we read to-day, is tempered by His triumph.

1. We must celebrate His triumph—short as it is—because it is the earnest and pledge of an immortal triumph—join in Hosanna—to be continued through eternity; take palm branches, to be carried one day “before the throne and in sight of the Lamb.”—*Apoc.* vii. 9.

2. “In the name of the Lord,” with an eternal mission for the glory of God and the salvation of man.

3. “Let them say that have been redeemed.”—*Ps.* cvi. 2. His triumph is for our redemption—let us join in it heartily.

CONCLUSION.—“Gloria laus et honor tibi sit Christe Redemptor, cui puerile decus prompsit Hosanna pium.” Let all, young and old, join in praising our Lord in this His sad triumph, with loving words and earnest hearts.

XXV

GOOD FRIDAY

THE PASSION

INTRODUCTION.—“It is consummated.”—*St. John* xix. 30.

Our Lord completed His work: “What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard.”—*Isa.* v. 4. “Exinanivit se”—“He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity.”—*Tit.* ii. 14. To-day we contemplate our redemption in its completeness, its suffering, and its love.

I. “He was despised, the most abject of men, a man of sorrows.”—*Isa.* liii. 3.

1. Think how much our Lord suffered from His friends—betrayed, denied, deserted. Their conduct was the bitterest part of His suffering—in a sense, it was the cause of all the rest. Is it not so now? What share have *we* had?

2. Think of the fury of His enemies! How they poured out their hatred on Him! See Him fastened to the pillar; fanatical Jews,

The Passion

envious Pharisees, hardened soldiers all joining together to scourge Him. "By His bruises we are healed." Are not our sins represented in all those classes?—our pride, our luxury, our envy?

3. Rejected by His people: "a sign to be contradicted." "Not this man but Barabbas." "His blood be upon us and on our children, and this from His own people." Have not we, too, often rejected Him?

II. "He was offered because of His own will."—*Isa.* liii. 7.

1. Think of our Lord laid on the cross—the altar of His sacrifice—so willingly extending His hands to receive the nails—so lovingly offering His Precious Blood for men. There is no angel to stop the sacrifice, as with Isaac, His prototype.

2. He offered at the same time the perpetual renewal of that sacrifice on our altars till the end of time—since He was "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world."—*Apoc.* xiii. 8.

3. "If I am lifted up, I will draw all things to Myself."—*St. John* xii. 32.

How painfully and how efficaciously is our Lord lifted up for those terrible three hours! He is raising the standard under which we are to fight—the "sign of the Son of Man," by which

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we are to triumph. Are we faithfully fighting the battle of the Cross ?

III. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ?"—*St. Matt.* xxvii. 46.

1. Our Lord here opens to us His Sacred Heart that we may see the flood of anguish and desolation with which He is overwhelmed—cut off, by His own will, from the beatific vision. "He hath filled me with bitterness, He hath inebriated me with wormwood."—*Lam.* iii. 15.

2. Take your stand with our Lady at the foot of the cross. With what loving eyes she saw Him during those three hours—racked with pain—growing weaker and fainter every moment, as His blood fell drop by drop. How tenderly she listened to every word, "What pierced His body pierced her heart." "Crucifixi fige plagas, cordi meo valide." "Quis est homo qui non fleret ?"

3. "And they watched Him."—*St. Matt.* xxvii. 36.

If even His enemies watched Him, how much more should we, knowing that every drop of His blood falls for us! This is the school of all Christian virtues—of heroism, patience, and love. On this day learn in this school to love Him as you ought.

The Passion

CONCLUSION.—“They shall look on Him whom they have pierced.”—*St. John* xix. 37. If the soldiers went away “striking their breasts,” ought not we to grieve over those sins by which we, too, have crucified the Son of God, and love Him who has paid so great a price for their remission ?

XXVI

EASTER SUNDAY

THE RESURRECTION

INTRODUCTION.—“This is the day which the Lord hath made.”—*Ps.* cxvii. 24. A glorious day, repeated every Sunday. Carrying on from week to week, age to age, the glory of the Resurrection. “*Dies diei eructat verbum.*”—*Ps.* xviii. 3.

1. How glorious the Heavens! “To Thee is praise; Thine is the kingdom.”—*1 Par.* xxix. 11. “Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom.”—*Apoc.* v. 10. “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”—*Heb.* i. 8.

2. How glorious to-day His name on earth! “*Te per orbem terrarum sancta confitetur Ecclesia.*”

I. “And very early they came to the sepulchre.” Let us go out very early, with the holy women, carrying sweet spices, “that they might anoint Jesus.”

1. With a great love for Jesus suffering; those

The Resurrection

who have not this, have no right to the glory of His Resurrection. What took them out *very early* on this morning but tender love for Jesus crucified and desire again to see and adore His sacred wounds ?

2. With great determination to remove obstacles. “Who shall roll back the stone ?” No “fear of the Jews,” no dread of the guard placed at the sepulchre kept them away. Those who aspire to share with Jesus risen must be prepared to overcome all obstacles.

3. Taking with them sweet spices —bought for a great price—the most precious things they had. What are *your* best offerings? Pure hearts, glowing hearts, the incense of prayer, the myrrh of mortification and good resolution.

“Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume thy garment.”—*Ps.* xliv. 9.

4. Seeking Jesus alone : “You seek Jesus of Nazareth? Be not affrighted.”

II. “Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father.”—*St. John* xx. 17.

1. How wonderful that glorious body. With properties and qualities admirable to the angels. Mary Magdalen might not touch it; to His Apostles only was it given to touch those wounds, as to His appointed witnesses and ministers.

2. This is the very glorified body bestowed

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on us in the Eucharist—too sacred to be made manifest to our senses. This day you are celebrating the Resurrection in presence of this very glorified body.

3. "Made like to the body of His glory."—*Phil.* iii. 21. The very type of the glory promised to us. The Resurrection our great example.

III. "If Christ be not risen again . . . your faith also is vain."—*I Cor.* xv. 14.

1. The Resurrection is the special ground and confirmation of faith. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."—*St. John* ii. 19. Renew your faith with great exultation this day.

2. The ground of hope. Christ's Resurrection alone can cast light upon the grave which is so dark to man.

3. The great object of our desire. All sadness, pain, wounds, and death are swallowed up in the glory of a joyful Resurrection—with *us* as with *Him*.

CONCLUSION.—"Victimæ Paschali laudes." What praise too great for Him who has won so great a victory—for *us*, not for *Himself*. "Agnus redemit oves." How much our salvation has cost. "Tu nobis Victor Rex miserere." May His mercy bring us all to the "glory of His Resurrection."

XXVII

LOW SUNDAY

PEACE

INTRODUCTION.—“Peace be to you.”

1. Our Lord rising from the dead—His second birth—brings the promise of peace, as at His first coming: “Peace on earth to men of good-will.” True peace His greatest gift.

2. It was for “men of good-will,” for those who loved Him, even if they had been weak and sinful. Were not their hearts “burning within them,” like the disciples at Emmaus, when they heard of the Resurrection?

3. For His enemies, however, what a terror and confusion! How dismayed must Pilate and Herod, the chief priests and Pharisees have been!

I. “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you.”—*St. John* xiv. 27. This peace ought to be our great desire, and it is our own fault if we do not possess it.

1. It is what “the world giveth not,” which

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is not dependent on worldly goods, on wealth, health, or prosperity—but may be the portion of the poor and miserable on earth.

2. It makes its possessors independent of the world, and turns its worst evils into blessings—making everything gold.

3. It is the forerunner and beginner of eternal peace. “I will bring upon her, as it were, a river of peace.”—*Isa.* lxvi. 12.

4. We may all enjoy this, since “He is our peace.”—*Eph.* ii. 14. But, then, we must be “sons of peace,” and His peace “will rest upon us.”—*St. Luke* x. 6.

II. “Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed.” The great requisite for peace is the spirit of faith.

1. Readiness to accept such grounds of faith as God offers to us—not making our own conditions, as St. Thomas did: “Except I see in His hands.”

2. Not asking for explanations which will satisfy the *imagination*, wishing to *see* and *touch* everything, but content with reasonable evidence.

3. “Joy and peace in believing” come only from generous faith, which remembers that God’s work will *always* be “wonderful in our eyes” (*Ps.* cxvii. 23); that “as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways

Peace

exalted above your ways" (*Isa.* lv. 9); and that faith is a "light shining in a dark place," which must always leave an infinity of things we cannot understand.

4. These very difficulties give us the opportunity of offering the highest kind of adoration—that of the understanding.

III. "He showed them His hands and His side."

1. These were the marks of His conflict, the signs of victory. If we would share His triumph we must share His battle.

2. Only one way to true peace—by conquering the enemy. What signs of battle can we show? "You have not yet resisted unto blood."—*Heb.* xii. 4. Are we conquering? or yielding, and making terms with the enemy?

3. Our Lord took His wounds as glorious trophies to heaven; we, too, shall have glory before God for every wound we receive. "To Him that overcometh I will give to eat of the tree of life."—*Apoc.* ii. 7.

CONCLUSION.—"If you be risen with Christ seek the things that are above."—*Col.* iii. Try to be sharers in His new life and the peace He brings to men. "Mane nobiscum Domine, quoniam advesperascit."

XXVIII

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

INTRODUCTION.—“I am the Good Shepherd.”

1. The Shepherd over all men—especially the careful and loving Shepherd, ruling over the fold of His Church. “Other sheep I have: these I must bring; there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”

2. This is our Lord’s favourite title—to show, not His dignity, but His disinterestedness, His diligence, His generosity, and His love. “What is man that thou art mindful of him?”—*Ps.* viii. 5. “The earth is mine and the fulness thereof.”—*Ps.* xlix. 12. “Quærens me sedisti lassus.”

Who can fear to have recourse to such a Shepherd?

1. “Doth He not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after that which was lost?”—*St. Luke* xv. 4.

1. Our Lord’s care is a special and individual

The Good Shepherd

one; we are not to Him a *crowd*, but individuals. "I know mine." "He knew what was in man." He knows the wants, feelings, aspirations, temptations, of each, and provides for all—beginners, weaklings, saints—for each He provides what is needful.

2. He has special care for sinners: "to save that which was lost."—*St. Matt.* xviii. 11. "Rejoice with me." He is constantly seeking after them, with unflinching patience. The wonders of His love established in His sacraments, are for them. No sinner, however fallen, need ever despair of His mercy.

3. Having placed it on His shoulders, He *brings it home*. He is never content till He has clothed the sinner with a new robe, placed a ring on his finger, and made him worthy of eternal life—as He did to Magdalen. Ask our Lord to complete His work in *you*.

II. "They shall hear My voice."

1. The great privilege of the fold is to hear His voice—with no uncertain sound—and to be fed with His Sacraments. This is the very object of establishing His fold, and can be found only in the Catholic Church.

2. Implies the corresponding duty of (1) at all costs being *in* the fold, and never straying. "A pearl of great price." (2) Of hearing

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obediently; giving true obedience to those whom He has placed in authority. "He that heareth you heareth Me."—*St. Luke* x. 16. "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to you as the heathen and the publican."—*St. Matt.* xviii. 17. You ought to see our Lord Himself in all ecclesiastical rulers, not the mere mortal men.

3. We must share in the spirit which animates that fold, not to be a discordant element in it. "The spirit of adoption of sons."—*Rom.* vii. 15.

III. "The hireling flieth because he is a hireling."

1. Our Lord is Shepherd for ever, though He exercises His office by the hands of men. He says, "I am with you always." He is the first pastor, the Shepherd of shepherds. How great the responsibilities of "the ministers of Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—*1 Cor.* iv. 1. St. Gregory says: "You hear in the Gospel your duty and our danger."—*Oct. St. Thom. Cant.*

2. But we are not the only shepherds. All those to whom our Lord has given the care of souls, or spiritual influence, or opportunities of doing good, are, in a sense, shepherds: parents, teachers, employers, and many others. When the "wolf cometh" are you the hireling of the good shepherd? Have you "no care of the

The Good Shepherd

sheep" ? Do you seek your own ease, comfort, and worldly advantage, or do you run away when the wolf comes—being afraid to face danger or discomfort ? Take example from the Good Shepherd, so that you may say with Him, "Of them thou hast given Me I have not lost any one."—*St. John* xviii. 9.

CONCLUSION.—"Thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will place thee over many."—*St. Matt.* xxv. 21. However small your charge, remember that it is a great honour and blessing to be associated with your Good Shepherd in His work. If you share in His toil you will share in His rewards.

XXIX

THE MONTH OF MAY

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

INTRODUCTION.—“Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God.”—*St. Luke* i. 30.

We are beginning the month of Mary. Two months, May and October, testify to the growing devotion of the Church.

1. The enemy has raged, and “spoken vain things” against her, but “ne timeas Maria.” God’s *favour* will never be taken away, and thy fulness of grace never cease.

2. May, as the month of beauty, brightness, and specially of *promise*, is dedicated to her.

3. Her devotion is, moreover, at this time, an excellent renewal to Easter, and support to all who have turned to God, and is a new and most tender way of leading sinners to their salvation.

I. “For behold from henceforth all generations shall call Me blessed.”—*St. Luke* i. 48.

Devotion to the Virgin Mary

Wonderful prophecy! Wonderfully fulfilled in the Catholic Church!

1. Her devotion is ever growing. Each age contributes something: some definition, making clear: "Mother of God," of Ephesus; numberless new feasts instituted; some fresh popular devotion—as the Rosary. The devotion is like a river, widening and deepening.

2. Not that earlier ages were wanting; nothing grander or more beautiful than their words—*e.g.* "Gaude O supercelestis gaudii," etc.—*Lect.* viii., Dec. 9. "Te honoro agnam immaculatam," "Ave delictum Patris," "Ave sanctior Cherubim," etc.—*Lect.* viii., ix., Dec. 12. The same devotion is *amplified* and *defined* in later ages.

3. Why so? Devotion to B.V.M. springs *necessarily* from devotion to the Incarnation, and keeps pace with it. Each age, in turn, meditates on and finds new wonders in the Incarnation, which the mind of creatures can never fathom or exhaust. As this devotion grows in precision and intensity, so must that to Mary.

II. "He that is mighty hath done great things for me."

The Church must necessarily be devout to our Lady, since its office is to carry out the work of Christ on earth.

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1. The Church, then, must love what He loved and honour what He honoured. The honour which our Lord paid her, the love of His Sacred Heart for her, are an infinitely greater honour than all that men can pay.

2. The reason of the honour we show is the "great things" God has done for her; and God Himself is the ultimate end of all that is done for her honour, and for all creatures. "Cum in Filium redundet quidquid honoris et laudis in Matrem impenditur."—*Lect.* v., Dec. 15.

III. "This shall be the sign of the covenant which I have established."—*Gen.* ix. 17.

Our Lady is called the Ark of the Covenant. How sacred that ark among the Jews, though only a symbol and prototype!

1. Our Lady was the reality. Perpetual memorial of the union of God and man—the very junction between the Creator and the creature. "Veritas de terra."—*Ps.* lxxxiv. 12.

2. The repository of God's greatest treasures, of Him in whom resided the fulness of the divinity—"corporaliter" (*Col.* ii. 9)—and fulness of grace. What was in the ark?

3. "Thou shall set the propitiatory on the ark."—*Exod.* xxvi. 34.

Special means of access to God; true city of

Devotion to the Virgin Mary

refuge, given to sinners by her Divine Son ;
her arms the true mercy seat.

CONCLUSION.—“ Now, and at the hour of our death.”

Be devout *now*. Use well the month of Mary, and trust that God may give you confidence in her, even to your last breath. No greater pledge of salvation.

Ask for her prayers *now*—the only moment in your power, “ nunc cœpi ”—and at your death, when you can do so little for yourself.

XXX

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

PATRONAGE OF ST. JOSEPH

INTRODUCTION.—“Go to Joseph, and do all that he shall say to you.”—*Gen.* xli. 55.

To-day the Church proposes St. Joseph to us as example and patron. St. Joseph is most suitably chosen as patron of the Catholic Church, since he was appointed by God guardian of the Holy Family. The Catholic Church is nothing more than the continuation and enlargement of the Holy Family, and still has Jesus and Mary in the midst of it.

I. “And the Lord blessed the house of the Egyptian for Joseph’s sake.”—*Gen.* xxxix. 5. And we may well look for special blessings and protection for our patron’s sake.

I. On account of his special dignity. His was an incommunicable dignity, which no other could possess, as was that of B.V.M.: Representative of the Eternal Father; Guardian of God’s most precious treasures; with rights and

Patronage of St. Joseph

authority over God Himself; “He was subject to them”; to whom was given a personal intimacy with our Lord such as no one else had.

2. Because of his spotless purity, the lily he bears; he was the “Nazarite amongst his brethren.”—*Gen.* xlix. 26. Found worthy of his place in the Holy Family after a long life in the world.

3. If those “faithful over a few things” are placed over many, how great the power that will be given to one to whom on earth so much was entrusted!

II. “Is not this the carpenter’s son?”—*St. Matt.* xiii. 55.

St. Joseph is an example to all classes and ranks—to the world as well as the cloister.

1. To fathers of families—in the gentle, careful, firm discharge of their duties: St. Joseph had to exercise authority even over the Son of God: in zeal for the *peace*, the *purity*, the *happiness* of their household.

2. To all men of business. St. Joseph had to mix with the world and do God’s work amongst men all day, and then return home to the company of Jesus and Mary.

3. To labourers. Who can complain of having to live by labour if our Lord’s foster father had to gain his bread by hard work? St. Joseph

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teaches them all to glory in their work, however hard, if only they do it as he did it—*for* and *with* Jesus.

III. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”—*Ps.* cxv. 15.

1. What reward did Jesus give St. Joseph for his love and care? A most happy death, Jesus and Mary supporting and comforting him.

2. A happy death the greatest of all gifts—it makes up for all sorrows.

3. St. Joseph obtained it by zealous work; “*fidelis servus et prudens*”; by spotless purity; by personal love of Jesus; follow His footsteps.

4. No one can *deserve* to die well; it is a special grace; but we should make a good end the one great aim and prayer of our lives, and we may leave the rest confidently to our Lord.

CONCLUSION.—“Remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin.”—*Ecclus.* vii. 40.

Ask St. Joseph to pray for you when your hour comes, and to help you now, by his prayers and example, along the path leading to a happy end.

XXXI

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

DEATH

INTRODUCTION.—“I leave the world and I go to the Father.”—*St. John* xvi. 28.

During this time our Lord is preparing for His departure and training His Apostles to follow Him.

From the time that they gazed after Him as He ascended, their work was, as ours is, to be ready when called on “to leave the world and go to the Father.”

I. “How are they brought to desolation! they have suddenly ceased to be: they have perished.”—*Ps.* lxxii. 19.

What sort of last end shall I have? Look at those who die around you.

I. How sudden! *Every* death is sudden when it comes, even when longest expected. Generally, how very short the time seems. A few days since, in health and strength; now dead and buried. So it seems to others; does

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the interval seem longer to them? "Our time is as the passing of a shadow."—*Wisd.* ii. 5.

2. How little opportunity will it give for preparation! How will our last illness approach? Not probably with a solemn warning, but a little cold, slight fever, or influenza, such as we have many times experienced. We shall be weary, fretful, occupied in making ourselves comfortable, and thinking how soon we shall be about again. Isn't this your experience?

Then suddenly to find out you are dying! You will certainly not find it out too soon. Where comes in the preparation you intended to make? "To-day for thee, to-morrow for me."

II. "I leave the world."

1. How many things we have to leave—home, friends, worldly possessions. All your affairs, your most secret business, must pass into other hands. Look round your room, and see the things you must part from; they will belong to someone else, and you will have nothing, and be forgotten.

2. How eagerly you have sought these things!—how closely attached to them! They have been the treasures of your life, and they are gone. Where your treasure is there also your heart shall be. "They have slept their sleep . . .

Death

they have found nothing in their hands.”—*Ps.* lxxv. 6.

3. “I go to the Father.” To your Father and your God—to your first beginning and last end.

The creature going before its Creator, the redeemed before his Redeemer, the criminal before his Judge, the servant before his Master, the prodigal son before his Father. How have you prepared for this most awful and inevitable meeting? “If I be a father, where is my honour? If I be a master, where is my fear?”—*Mal.* i. 6.

III. “Go forth, Christian soul, out of this world.”

1. Go forth in the name of God and His angels and saints to appear before that awful throne. “For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ.”—*2 Cor.* v. 10.

2. Go forth *at once*—no time for preparation. “A cry was made: Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet him.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 6. Not a moment’s delay.

3. You have had ample means of preparation—during life and at death. What more *could* we have? A last confession to purify our whole lives. The Viaticum to prepare us for the last journey by our Lord’s very presence. Extreme

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Unction to efface the remains of sin and strengthen body and soul—a last indulgence. Yes; but how shall we *use* these means? Much as we do the Sacraments now. Those who neglect them now are likely to neglect them then.

4. “May Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and cheerful countenance.” What pains are we now taking to deserve the mild and loving look He will cast on those who at least try to please him.

CONCLUSION.—“How many are the days of thy servant?”—*Ps.* cxviii. 84. “Ye know not at what hour your Lord will come.”—*St. Matt.* xxiv. 42. Prepare diligently for that last passage. “The night cometh when no man can work.”

XXXII

MONTH OF MAY

OUR LADY

INTRODUCTION.—“Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee.”—*Cant.* iv. 7.

The month of Mary is a time for contemplating the works of grace and sanctity in the Mother of God.

“He that is mighty hath done great things for me.” Great things; fitting her for her dignity; redounding to the glory of God; a consolation and example to ourselves.

I. “All good things came to me together with her.”—*Wisd.* vii. 11.

1. Our Lady was the “Gate of Heaven.” Through her God entered into the world; heaven and earth were joined; the gate through which “the Lord God of Israel hath entered.”—*Ezech.* xlv. 2.

2. Through her came the great privileges the Incarnation brought to men; “cives sanctorum et domestici Dei,” and the graces corresponding with them.

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3. She is the constant means of access given to us by God—the “Mother of Divine Grace,” the gate never closed against us.

4. Jacob saw “angels ascending and descending,” and said, “Terrible is this place,” feeling himself so near to heaven. How much nearer we, with this gate given to us—petitions ascending and graces coming down through her. “Quæ sursum quærite.”

II. “Terrible as an army set in array.”—*Cant.* vi. 3. This most gentle virgin, having no word of harshness, yet is the “Tower of David.” Stronghold of the Church. “Quæ serpentis caput,” “totas hæreses.”

1. Strong in her purity. “The Tower of Ivory.” She may say with our Lord, “In me the prince of this world hath not anything.”—*St. John* xiv. 30. This is the only strength against the enemy.

2. Strong in her union with the Divine Son. Was there ever such union of heart and will!

3. Learn that every sin means weakness. “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”—*St. John* viii. 34. Every affection leading us from our Lord means weakness. If we cannot be strong by sinlessness, at least let us try to be so by a *desire* of perfection—by a great *love* for it.

Our Lady

4. Feel your own weakness and thank God for the help given you—"succurre miseris, juva pusillanimes."

III. "Myrrh and stacte and cassia perfume thy garments."—*Ps.* xliv. 9.

1. Our Lady is called the "Mystical Rose"—always giving an odour of sweetness before God—"dedit odorem suum."

2. In what does this chiefly consist?

The odour of spotless *purity*; freedom from small sins, and especially perfect chastity; of *devotion*, complete *giving up* of self; "fiat mihi," "ancilla domini," of tender love.

3. Do we give a good odour before our Creator? What spoils it?

CONCLUSION.—"The Queen stood on thy right hand in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety."—*Ps.* xliv. 10.

Look up devoutly to the Queen whom God has given us as an intercessor at His right hand.

Try to imitate the pure and untarnished gold she presents, and also the boundless variety of her excellence, pleasing in all things.

XXXIII

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION.—“Ask and you shall receive.”

The Gospel leads necessarily to the subject of prayer.

Its importance; you cannot hear of it too frequently.

Those faithful to prayer can *hardly* be lost—an easy way of salvation. The key to all graces; in *itself* one of the two great channels, and generally necessary for effectively using the *other* channel—the Sacraments. For instance, the fruit of your Communion is generally in direct proportion to your diligence in prayer.

I. “The continual prayer of a just man availeth much.”—*St. James* v. 16.

I. “Much” for removing obstacles; “Be thou removed.”—*St. Mark* xi. 23. For avoiding temptation, “watch and pray”; obtaining assistance in outward or inward difficulties. “Prayer was made without ceasing.”—*Acts*

Prayer

xii. 5. "Thrice I besought the Lord."—2 *Cor.*

xii. 8. "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me."—*Phil.* iv. 13.

2. "Much" for our own salvation; for others "pray for one another that you may be saved" (*St. James* v. 16); and for the souls of the faithful.

3. Prayer the *principal* weapon given to us. Christians must be men of prayer, or they are like soldiers without arms.

II. "Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant."—*Pss.* xxx. 17.

1. The essence of prayer is going into the presence of God—in your *will*, if you cannot always do so in *imagination*—"raising up your mind and heart to God." No prayer can be good unless you have *tried* to do this. "I leave the world and I go to the Father."—*St. John* xvi. 28.

2. By this Presence you are enlightened. "Come ye to Him and be enlightened" (*Pss.* xxxiii. 6), and your way is made plain. "In Thy light we shall see light."—*Pss.* xxxv. 10. "Darkness shall cover the earth . . . but the Lord shall rise upon thee."—*Isa.* lx. 2. You are strengthened; all your good resolutions must be refreshed in God's presence. Your affections are inflamed—"exardescet ignis."

3. You should go forth from prayer, like Moses, radiant "from the conversation of the

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Lord.”—*Exod.* xxxiv. 29. Is your prayer like this? Is this your *notion* of prayer?

III. “You receive not because you ask amiss.”—*St. James* iv. 3.

Because, perhaps,

1. You grudge time. “Diverse weights and diverse measures.”—*Prov.* xx. 10. A few minutes *long* for prayer, but *short* for amusement. You can do *nothing* well if you grudge the time. “Launch out into the deep.”—*St. Luke* v. 4. Be more generous, and prayer will become more profitable and easier.

2. You want care in recollecting yourself. “Enter into the chamber and shut the door.”—*St. Matt.* vi. 6.

3. You want reverence. “Put off the shoes from thy feet” (*Ex.* iii. 5) when you come into God’s presence.

4. You want perseverance. “Persevering with one mind in prayer.”—*Acts* i. 14. “Erit pernoctans,” “factus in agonia prolixius orabat.”

CONCLUSION.—“Hitherto you have asked not anything in My name.” How little have we asked! How little have we gained in proportion to what we *might* have received! If we would save our souls we must perfect ourselves in prayer—striving each day to pray better than the day before.

XXXIV

THE ASCENSION

INTRODUCTION.—“God is ascended with jubilee.”
—*Ps.* xlvi. 6.

1. Day of gladness ; conclusion of our Lord’s labours, when the humiliations of Calvary were repaired ; when Jesus was to resume “the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth.”—*St. John* i. 14.

2. How happy was His Blessed Mother to see the exaltation of the Sacred Humanity—the glory of those wounds which were to be the admiration of angels.

3. How the Apostles rejoiced in that glimpse of heaven, given to strengthen them for their labour, till “a bright cloud took Him from their sight.” “*Psallite Deo nostro, psallite.*”

1. “And lifting up His hands He blessed them.”—*St. Luke* xxiv. 50.

The work of the forty days complete. How great a work ! how full the days !

1. The stores of knowledge for all ages to be “brought back to their minds” by the Holy

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Spirit. The complete authority and power to organise the Church to be a living body—"doctrine, orders, and mission" to the Apostles.

2. The last testimony to His resurrection—that they might be "witnesses even to the uttermost parts of the earth."—*Acts* i. 8.

3. Then He blessed them—as God in the beginning saw His work and blessed it. On His blessing the Church was to rely—in it to be rich, by it to prevail.

4. Let *us* rejoice and trust in this blessing, which has come down to us. We have shared the "incredulity and hardness of heart" of the disciples; join in their confidence to-day.

II. "He was carried up into heaven."—*St. Luke* xxiv. 51.

What human imagination can picture His triumph! How poor the triumphs of earthly victors!

1. Ascending by His own power—the elements His humble servants. "Who makes the clouds Thy chariot, Who walkest upon the wings of the winds."—*Ps.* ciii. 3. "For all things serve thee."—*Ps.* cxviii. 91. "O Rex gloriæ, Domine virtutum."

2. "He led captivity captive."—*Eph.* iv. 8. Throng of liberated souls, children of His pain, captives of His love, triumphing in His glory.

The Ascension

3. Choirs of angels coming out to meet Him. "Tibi omnes angeli." "See, forth from the gates, like a bridal array, the Princes of Heaven, how brightly they shine."—*Hymn*.

4. "Attollite portas . . . et introibit Rex gloriæ."—*Ps. xxiii*. "He hath broken gates of brass, and burst iron bars."—*Ps. cvi. 16*.

How triumphant the opening of Heaven's gate to men!—never again to be closed. His triumph was for *us*.

III. "In My Father's house there are many mansions."—*St. John xiv. 2*.

1. In this glorious "realm of light" *each* has a place—not like earthly rewards. "They a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one."—*1 Cor. ix. 25*.

2. The *lowest* place more glorious than all this world. "Eye hath not seen."

3. Yet "star differeth from star," therefore "be zealous for the better gifts."—*1 Cor. xii. 31*.

Be ambitious—every step means being nearer to our Lord, seeing Him more clearly, loving Him more intensely, and that for eternity.

CONCLUSION.—"Why stand you looking to heaven?" We look up, not in idle contemplation, but that His glory may be imprinted on our minds, that we may remember the road

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leading to it: "Whither I go you know, and the way you know." "I am the way, the truth, and the life."—*St. John* xiv. 4-6. That we may feel the necessity of setting to work *at once*, and working hard for our crown.

XXXV

OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION

THE HOLY SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION.—“ You shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost.”—*Acts* i. 5.

Think of the Church gathered at this time in the upper chamber—around our Blessed Lady.

How small a beginning ! Waiting for this new Baptism ; full of their great mission and its responsibilities ; feeling their own weakness ; patient and prayerful ; desiring to receive the Paraclete promised them.

The model for all Christians who desire to do God’s work.

I. “ It is expedient for you that I go.”—*St. John* xvi. 7.

This shows us the immense importance of grace.

1. Better that He should go—that they might be no longer children—but do His work manfully.

2. Better that they should serve Him by faith instead of rejoicing in His presence.

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Neither faith, nor courage, nor love could be made perfect without being exposed to trials. "Blessed are those that have not seen."—*St. John* xx. 29.

"Power is made perfect in infirmity."—2 *Cor.* xii. 9.

3. So the grace of God given to us is better for us than any external manifestation. A great comfort to us in time of trial.

II. "It is not you that speak, but the spirit of your Father."—*St. Matt.* x. 20.

1. The Apostles had to learn how little *they* could do. It was not to be *their* work, but His.

2. They were to trust themselves to Him in order that He might make them witnesses to Him "to the uttermost parts of the earth" (*Acts* i. 8), and "bring all things to their minds."—*St. John* xiv. 26.

3. We have to imitate the Apostles in their distrust of themselves and confidence in God. This is the great lesson of these days of retirement. How often we fail from want of these dispositions.

III. "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer."—*Acts* i. 14.

1. Every serious work should begin with prayer. The Apostles had the greatest of all works to do: to establish a Church to teach all

The Holy Spirit

nations ; to carry on our Lord's work till the end of time. See how they prepared for it.

2. "Every good gift, every perfect gift is from above" (*St. James* i. 17)—coming down like dew from heaven. But the ground must be prepared to receive it. "If the Son of Peace be there your peace shall rest upon Him."—*St. Luke* x. 6. Are our hearts prepared for God's grace ?

3. The Apostles prepared for the grace of the Holy Spirit by retirement : "Enter into thy chamber, and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father" (*St. Matt.* vi. 6) ; by persevering prayer in union with our Blessed Lady ; by a great desire to receive the graces our Lord had promised. "Esurientes implevit bonis." The graces they received were in proportion to the preparation they had made.

CONCLUSION.—"I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete."—*St. John* xiv. 16.

The Holy Spirit is the gift of our Lord. The descent of the Holy Ghost is the fruit of our Lord's Passion. We have, then, to thank our Lord for the graces the Holy Spirit gives us for His sake.

"Veni Sancte Spiritus, et emitte cœlitus, lucis tuæ radium."

XXXVI

WHIT-SUNDAY

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

INTRODUCTION.—“The spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world.”—*Wisd.* i. 7.

To-day the most wondrous pouring forth of the Holy Spirit is celebrated: the gift of our Lord and first fruits of His Passion. “If I go I will send Him to you.”

Wondrous from its abundance and fruitfulness; wondrous from its permanence; not a passing visit, but for all time. The spirit of the Lord to be always with His Church. “The spirit of God moved over the waters.”—*Gen.* i. 2.

I. “You have received the spirit of adoption of sons.”—*Rom.* viii. 15.

To-day is the ratifying of a new covenant, the giving of a new law.

On the Day of Pentecost the Israelites received the law on Mount Sinai and were formally made by covenant God’s people, so on the day of Pentecost was the Church formally

The Day of Pentecost

established; before it was the family of our Lord; now His universal Church. Compare the spirit of the two covenants.

1. *Then* God drew a line round the mountain which none should pass; *now* He assembles His children around the Mother of Jesus.

2. *Then* gave a law of fear, deterring men by penalties; now draws them by His love. *Then* His law was inscribed on tablets of stone; now on the hearts of men.

3. *Then* a tabernacle set up—the Holy of Holies being hidden by a veil; *now* every Christian soul is made a sanctuary.

4. The spirit of the new covenant requires us to be zealous for God—generous and loving to Him. “The Spirit of Sons.”

II. “You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost.”—*Acts* i. 8.

1. The Holy Spirit is the life of the Church. It had organisation and priestly power, but needed the Spirit of Life.

2. The Holy Spirit was “like a mighty wind coming,” “moving over the waters” (*Gen.* i. 2) to give that undying life.

3. Which was to make it the permanent witness to our Lord. “You shall be witnesses to Me.”

4. And the unfailing teacher of men. “For

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it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father.”—*St. Matt.* x. 20. “Scientiam habet vocis.”—*Wisd.* i. 7.

III. “Parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them.”—*Acts* ii. 3.

The Holy Spirit the life of every Christian soul—“every one of them.”

I. “Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”—*Rom.* viii. 14. We can only be sons of God by yielding to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

2. We do this by allowing the Holy Spirit to enlighten us. “Emitte cœlitus, lucis tuæ radium.” As the ray of light contains all colours, so this heavenly ray contains all knowledge and all virtue.

3. By allowing it to warm our hearts: “tui amoris ignem accende”—it is the very fire our Lord came to cast upon earth.

4. By allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us; “the Lord working withal.” The Holy Spirit came *not* that the Apostles might remain idle, but do great work; so with us. What is this work? “Nescit tarda molimina Spiritus Sancti gratia.”

CONCLUSION.—“Stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands.”—*2 Tim.* i. 6.

The Day of Pentecost

We have received the Holy Spirit as the Apostles did ; are we profitably using the store of grace entrusted to us ?—are we keeping holy the temples which He sanctified ?—are we keeping alive the sacred fire then lighted in our souls ?

XXXVII

TRINITY SUNDAY

THE BLESSED TRINITY

INTRODUCTION.—“ Let us bless the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Ghost.” “ *Benedicite.*”

After celebrating the mysteries of our redemption, the Church turns to the foundation of all—the Blessed Trinity.

1. The greatest and most majestic of mysteries—Three in One. “ The Father is God,” etc.—*Athanasian Creed.*

The mystery for ever unfathomable to created understandings, for ever adored by angels.

2. The secret of His Divine Nature revealed not to perplex and confound us, but to call for our admiration and touch our hearts. What greater mark of love and confidence could He give than by revealing Himself to us? “ To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.”

I. “ Of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things ; to Him be glory for ever.”—*Rom.* xi. 36.

The Blessed Trinity

1. The “most ancient of all mysteries”—a whole eternity with none to adore. “Thy throne is prepared from of old. Thou art from everlasting.”—*Ps.* xcii. 2.

2. The one only *necessary* Existence—all other things only contingent, need not have been, dependent; for their existence on the will of God.

“For Thy will they were and have been created.”—*Apoc.* iv. 11.

3. Surrounding, filling, energising all things: “in quo omnia.”

4. Specially the foundation of all Christian mysteries: the Incarnation, the Passion, the Sacrifice of the Mass—all immediately dependent on this mystery, and owe to it their sublimity.

II. “O the depths of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!”—*Rom.* xi. 33.

1. How wonderful is God in nature! Constantly widening wonders of science! Which ever way we look we meet a world of manifest infinities—of space, of time, of number, of greatness, and minuteness! “Qui sedes super Cherubim intuens abyssos.”

2. Can we wonder that the author of all these

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wonders is Himself infinitely wonderful and mysterious in His own nature ?

3. This wonder ought to make it easy for human reason to accept, not grudgingly but lovingly, all the mysteries of faith, all the wonderful ways of His providence, all the things which are necessarily startling to our understandings. "As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways."—*Isa.* lv. 9.

4. We ought to learn from contemplating the Blessed Trinity that humble adoration and submission are the only reasonable mental attitude of man to God.

III. "That they may be one, as thou, Father, in Me, and I in thee."—*St. John* xvii. 21.

What lesson can we learn from such a mystery ?

1. That we should be united together as children and servants of this holy and undivided Trinity.

2. That in all our works we should go forth, as the Apostles did, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

3. That, as the Blessed Trinity is the beginning of all things, so it is the end of all things, and that "every prayer and work of ours should begin always from Thee, and through Thee be happily ended."

The Blessed Trinity

CONCLUSION.—“Tibi Cherubim et Seraphim. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus. Pleni sunt cœli et terra majestatis gloriæ tuæ.” Join with all the host of heaven in the chorus of admiration, praise, homage, and love arising on this feast to the ever-adorable Trinity.

XXXVIII

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

INTRODUCTION.—“And He coming forth saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them.”—*St. Matt.* xiv. 14.

During this octave we celebrate the great Feast of Corpus Christi.

1. Everywhere Benedictions and processions—our Lord carried from place to place. It is a return of the time when He passed through streets and villages of Judea blessing children, curing the sick, showing compassion to all; “Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.”—*St. Luke* xviii. 38.

2. Meet our Lord as they did; offer your gifts, your incense, your prayers; put your wants before Him as they did: “If I touch only His garment I shall be healed.”—*St. Matt.* ix. 21. “For virtue went out from Him and healed all.”—*St. Luke* vi. 19.

The Blessed Sacrament

I. "Stay with us, O Lord."—*St. Luke* xxiv. 29.

This is the great cry of God's creation. It is answered in the Blessed Sacrament. "I am with you all days." We are honouring to-day His permanent presence, not only by His watchful care—"semper vivens ad interpellandum"—nor by His ready grace, but by personal presence as God and man, and local habitation—His opening His house to us.

1. How grand the Temple, with its mercy-seat! "Whatsoever they shall pray for in this place, hear them in the place of Thy dwelling in heaven" (3 *Kings* viii. 30)—a greater mercy-seat amongst us.

2. How holy the house of Nazareth; continued by His presence amongst us in every church.

3. Everything breathes of His presence—the altar, the tabernacle, the lamp show it is truly "the house of God and the gate of heaven."—*Gen.* xxviii. 17.

4. "I have lifted my eyes to the mountains from whence help shall come to me."—*Ps.* cxx. 1. Our Lord is here to comfort, to refresh, to strengthen His people. "Our God is our refuge and our strength."—*Ps.* xlv. 1.

II. "Neither is there any other nation so

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great that hath gods so nigh them.”—*Deut.* v. 7.

1. Our Lord brings His court with Him. “*Millia millium ministrabant ei.*” “*Jerusalem novam descendentem.*”—*Apoc.* xxi. 2. Virtue goes out from Him.

2. Great is the privilege of entering His presence. “A greater than Solomon is here.”

3. We must enter with fear, as into the presence of a great King. “Come near, then, and touch the sceptre.”—*Esther* xv. 14. “*Sicut oculi servorum.*”—*Ps.* cxxii. 2.

4. We must welcome Him as a guest come amongst us. “*Ave verum Corpus.*” Let it not be said of us, “I entered into Thy house, Thou gavest me no water for My feet.”—*St. Luke* vii. 44. We do so by frequent and loving visits, both in solitude and at Benediction.

III. “With desire I have desired to eat this pasch.”—*St. Luke* xxii. 15.

We specially commemorate the Last Supper. “*Noctis recolitur cæna novissima.*”

1. The loving words with which He gave Himself to His Apostles.

2. The communion, or bond of union, with Himself and His Church. “That they may be one, as we also are one.”—*St. John* xvii. 21.

The Blessed Sacrament

“Omnes qui de uno pane participamus.”—

1 *Cor.* x. 17.

3. The source of light He has given us.

“Accedite ad eum et illuminamini.”—*Ps.* xxxiii. 6.

4. The fountain of living waters. “He would have given thee living water.”—*St. John* iv. 10.

CONCLUSION.—“Sit laus plena, sit sonora,” “quia major omni laude.” Join with heaven and earth in celebrating our Lord’s presence in the Blessed Sacrament. Emulate the devotion and love of the angels. His sacrament is given to *us*, not to the angels.

XXXIX

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE SACRED HEART

INTRODUCTION.—“ My eyes and My heart shall be there always.”—3 *Kings* ix. 3.

To-day we honour the Sacred Heart, and delight to think that It is always in the midst of us.

It is emphatically the devotion of modern times. It arose from such small beginnings—against such opposition. It was eagerly accepted by the Catholic Church, which is so strongly opposed to novelties.

Why so zealously taken up? Why made so prominent in these days? Explanation needed.

I. “ I and the Father are one.”—*St. John* x. 30.

The Hypostatic Union—that our Lord is “ perfect God and perfect man . . . not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person ” (*Ath. Creed*)—is the foundation of Christian religion, but is the doctrine most resisted by human reason. It is the great work of the

The Sacred Heart

Church to defend it ; so she has resisted Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians in past ages amongst other things, by making prominent the devotion to the B.V.M. as “ Mother of God.”

So now, against the same fundamental error of modern times, she puts before us the devotion to the Sacred Heart, which devotion,

1. Unmistakably enforces the union of God and man, adoring the human heart of Him who was God.

2. And it does so in the most sympathetic manner—speaking strongly of His infinite love to us. “ I have loved thee with an everlasting love.”

3. The Sacred Heart is the symbol of generosity and suffering. Every drop of blood He shed was poured out by the Sacred Heart. Every pain, mental or physical, was felt by It. “ Semetipsum exinanivit,” “ inebriavit me absinthio.”—*Thren.* iii. 15.

II. “ The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.”—*St. Matt.* iv. 10.

A devotion to the Sacred Heart shows religion to consist in *adoring, praising, and doing* the will of God—not in pretty sentiments. “ He that doth the will of My Father.”—*St. Matt.* vii. 21.

1. Modern religion makes religion *subjective*—

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considering it as affecting our feelings, elevating our ideas, and refining our minds, not the humble adoration of a Creator before whom we are “dust and ashes.”—*Gen.* xviii. 27. It is a hysterical emotion, not an adoration.

2. The devotion to the Sacred Heart makes us forget ourselves and our feelings, and adore God made man—thinking of *His* humiliation, *His* anguish, *His* love.

III. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example.”—*I St. Peter* ii. 21.

1. The Sacred Heart is the example of *all* excellence. “In all things like as we are without sin.”—*Heb.* iv. 15. The admiration of angels; the school of saints; the original source of all example. “Be ye imitators of Me as I of Christ.”—*I Cor.* iv. 16. “Discite a Me.”

2. It is the fountain of all graces—of light and heat; of love, contrition, and generosity. “In whom are all the treasures of wisdom.”—*Col.* ii. 3. “Of His fulness we all have received.”—*St. John* i. 16.

3. It is our unfailing refuge in all troubles, of which the “Mercy Seat” was the type. “Come to Me, all ye that labour.”—*St. Matt.* xi. 28.

CONCLUSION.—“A man according to His own heart.”—*I Kings* xiii. 14.

The Sacred Heart

We must try to be according "to God's own heart," and can only be so as lovers of the Sacred Heart, imitators of the Sacred Heart, and dependent on the Sacred Heart of our Lord.

XL

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TEACHING

INTRODUCTION.—“The multitude pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God.”—*Ev. cur.*

1. How great an anxiety they showed ; from all parts, in spite of all difficulties ; an example and a reproach to those who can hear it so easily, and do not care for it.

2. In *all* teaching it is to Him we are to look. It is His word we are to hear, and on Him we are to rely.

I. “Going into a ship that was Simon’s.”

1. From Peter’s boat alone our Lord teaches now, as then. From Him *comes* only real, continuous, authoritative teaching—teaching “as one having power and not as the Scribes.”—*St. Mark* i. 22.

2. All teaching comes through his successors—that is, every Bishop and priest in the Church teaches with their authority, and in dependence on them.

Teaching

3. "Nevertheless, at Thy word I will let down the net." St Peter's teaching is at our Lord's word and by His authority. "Go and teach." "He that heareth you." "Thou, being strengthened, confirm thy brethren." "From henceforth thou shalt catch men."

II. "We have laboured all the night and have taken nothing." We must not be discouraged when doing what our Lord tells us.

1. Previous failures are no reason. "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" The moment for success has not yet come—or it was necessary to test our patience—but success will reward us some day if we persevere.

2. In fact, the night is often darkest before dawn, and the failure may seem greatest almost at the moment of success.

3. Think of this in the battle of salvation. You have tried twenty times to overcome a bad habit—you may succeed the twenty-first. No satisfactory result has come from a number of attempted good works—persevere, the success may be very near.

4. It certainly was so with the saints. What failures their efforts seemed. Remember St. Paul's labours and discouragements—"foris pugnæ intus timores." Yet what grand ultimate results.

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III. "Launch out into the deep."

Half our difficulties come from being afraid to launch out into the deep—that is, we are,

1. Afraid of *committing* ourselves to anything; afraid of being or seeming too good.

2. Afraid of trouble; greatly afraid of hurting ourselves; wanting in generosity.

3. Very often it is really easier to do a good deal than very little. For example, those who give very little time to prayer feel it a great burden; those who give a great deal feel it a happiness. So of other things.

4. "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." A great contrast to our attitude at a little success. We should have the same feeling, but should say, "Come to me, O Lord, for I am wholly dependent on Thee."

CONCLUSION.—"Leaving all, they followed Him." We are not called on to do this in fact, but the essence of being Christians is to be ready to give up everything which interferes with His service. "Qui amat patrem aut matrem plus quam me, non est me dignus."

XLI

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

INTRODUCTION.—“Without the shedding of blood there is no remission.”—*Heb.* ix. 22.

Great is the Church's devotion to the Precious Blood. Shown in the two feasts every year. We must be devout to the Precious Blood as the *token* and *instrument* of our Redemption; the perpetual sign of the love of Christ; the greatest incentive to love to Him “who has redeemed us to God in His Blood.”—*Apoc.* v. 9.

I. “You were not redeemed with gold or silver, but with the Precious Blood of Christ.”—*1 St. Peter* i. 18.

1. It was the destined and only price of man's redemption. “Redemption through His Blood.”—*Eph.* i. 7. “I shall see the blood and pass over you.”—*Ex.* xii. 13. Nothing else would suffice.

2. The only “laver of regeneration”—they “have washed their robes and made them

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white in the Blood of the Lamb.”—*Apoc.* vii. 14.
Every one saved has been bathed in this fountain.

3. The only source of grace. All the ordinary means of grace are but channels from this one fountain. The prayers of the saints, our own prayers, the Sacraments, are only ways in which the Precious Blood is applied to our souls ; fountains “springing up unto life everlasting.”—*St. John* iv. 14.

4. Especially Penance, the “fountain open to the house of David.”—*Zach.* xiii. 1. “The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin” (1 *St. John* i. 7); and the Holy Eucharist, where we receive the very source itself ; “*Dedit et tristibus Sanguinis poculum.*” In all the Sacraments look to the Precious Blood of our Lord.

II. “Being in an agony His sweat became as drops of blood.”—*St. Luke* xxii. 44.

1. The Precious Blood is the symbol of His suffering. “*Unde primum cucurrit inspicias.*”—*St. John Chrys.* lect. iv. Pret. Sang. Pressed out by His agony ; scattered by the scourges ; trickling from His thorny crown ; bathing the nails and the spear. “*Exivit Sanguis.*”—*St. John* xix. 34. Every drop tells us of some anguish borne.

2. Symbol of His Patience : not poured out

The Precious Blood

once, but *many* times; drops falling for three hours. Patiently waiting for sinners—every drop a voice calling to them. “They shall look on Him they have pierced.”—*St. John* xix. 27.

3. Of His generosity. How much less would have been sufficient! “*Cujus una stilla salvum facere*” (*Adoro Te*). Poured out abundantly, “that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.”—*St. John* x. 10.

“What is there that I ought to do more for My vineyard?”—*Isa.* v. 4. Our Lord would do *everything* for the conversion of sinners and the perfecting of the saints. “It is consummated.”

III. “What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?”—*St. Matt.* xvi. 26.

The devotion to the Precious Blood shows us most strongly the value of souls.

1. How great the value of the souls for “whom Christ hath died.”—*1 Cor.* viii. 11. For what else would He have given a single drop of His Blood? Honours? Riches? Pleasures? “I count all things to be but loss.”—*Phil.* iii. 8.

2. Specially the value of your *own* soul; can you let your soul perish for which so great a price was given? It is *your* affair, none can save or lose it but you. Can you “hate your own soul” (*Ps.* x. 6) which He bought at so

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dear a rate? “Anima mea in manibus meis semper.”—*Ps.* cxviii. 109.

3. We must be lovers of souls, desiring to convert sinners, make converts, spread the faith, because souls are so dear to our Lord. “I thirst.” “Shall shine as stars.”—*Dan.* xii. 3.

CONCLUSION.—“His Blood be upon us and upon our children.”—*St. Matt.* xxvii. 25.

A fearful curse as used by the Jews, but we may make it our most earnest and loving prayer. “Upon us,” to cleanse, fortify, and fertilise our souls, and to teach us to know and value His love.

XLII

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DOING GOOD

INTRODUCTION.—“Decline from evil and do good.”—*Ep. cur.* In the Epistle St. Peter gives a grand exhortation on the duties of a Christian life.

I. “Decline from evil”—that is the first thing.

1. From all sorts of evil without distinction—to God, our neighbours, or ourselves; whether odious or fashionable before men; whether open or secret. God cannot endure iniquity.

2. We are apt to keep some idol—or compound for some fault—as the Jews would not take away the high places and cut down the groves. Those who are by nature not inclined to certain vices are apt to be severe about those to cover their laxity in other matters.

3. No virtues can make up for even one grievous fault persevered in. One mortal

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wound is enough—one serious leak in a ship is fatal. “If I deliver my body to be burned.” “He who offends in one point is guilty of all.”—*St. James* ii. 10.

4. Even if not grievous, one fault persevered in greatly stops God’s grace. A very little sand will soon prevent a machine from working.

5. So “purge out the old leaven.” “He that is just let him be justified still.”—*Apoc.* xxii. 11. You cannot avoid all faults, but you *can* strive against all.

II. “Do good.”

1. People say, “I do no harm,” “I hurt no one.” But God didn’t put you here merely to do no harm. “Wicked and slothful servant.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 28. “He had wasted his goods.”—*St. Luke* xvi. 1.

2. Is it *true* that you are doing no harm? “He that is not with Me is against me.”—*St. Luke* xi. 23. So, everyone who is not exerting himself to do good, probably is doing harm.

3. “What must I do to possess eternal life?”—*St. Luke* x. 25. Our Lord doesn’t say, “Do no harm,” but “Sell what thou hast,” “Suffereth violence,” “Goes out by prayer and fasting,” etc.

4. Doing nothing. Is not that a proof of

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want of love? Can you “love the Lord with your whole heart,” and do nothing when there is so much to do for God and for your neighbours?

5. “Ab occultis meis”—think a little more of sins of omission. All the condemnations described by our Lord were for sins of omission. “I was hungry and you gave Me *not* to eat.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 42.

III. “Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—*St. Matt.* v. 20.

1. They did a great deal, however; were exact in obedience; “mint and cummin.”—*St. Matt.* xxiii. 23. Fasted, prayed, and gave alms. How much behind them are we in many things—in zeal, in activity, and self-denial!

2. Their fault was want of purity of intention—perversity in wishing to do their own way, and to glorify themselves; want of the filial spirit, the love of God which His creatures ought to have.

3. Do you make up for shortcomings by purity of intention and by filial love? Do you ever “suffer anything for justice’ sake”? as St. Peter says. Do you “sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts”?

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CONCLUSION.—“I have fought the good fight.”—2 *Tim.* iv. 7. St. Paul was the great apostle of grace—of its freedom, of its efficacy, yet no one speaks more of the need of great exertion. Will not those who take their religion so easily find themselves mistaken? “With fear and trembling work out your salvation.”—*Phil.* ii. 12. “Non coronatur nisi legitime certaverit.”

XLIII

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE WORD OF GOD

INTRODUCTION.—“ They have now been with Me three days.”

With what urgency, patience, and self-forgetfulness the crowds pressed to hear our Lord ! “ The multitude pressed on Jesus to hear the word of God.”—*St. Luke* v. 1.

What a contrast to the indifference Christians sometimes show ? Some are like the Jews who “ loathed ” the manna from heaven (*Num.* xxi. 5), or the “ deaf asp that stoppeth her ears ” (*Ps.* lvii. 5). St. Paul says : “ There will be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine.”—*2 Tim.* iv. 3. Is not this impatience of hearing God’s word a sign of reprobation ?

I. “ The seed is the word of God.”—*St. Luke* viii. 11.

I. All fruits of virtue come from God’s word ; nothing can possibly be done without it. Holy Scripture full of the praise of this word. “ More to be desired than gold and many precious stones. Lightsome, enlightening the eyes.”—

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Ps. cxviii. Super senes intellexi quia mandata tua quæsivi.

2. God's word is "a light shining in a dark place."—2 *St. Peter* i. 19. The clearest human knowledge is only "through a glass in a dark manner."—1 *Cor.* xiii. 12.

Then to hear the word of God diligently is about the first of our duties, and there are many ways in which we ought to do it.

II. "All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice."—2 *Tim.* iii. 16.

1. Importance of a sufficient knowledge of Holy Scripture—especially of those parts which immediately concern us: (1) the life of our Lord. How diligently and constantly the Church puts His words and actions before us! The Gospel, the Mysteries of the Rosary, the Stations. Can we be Christians if we don't take the trouble to study them? (2) The devotional parts—the Psalms, etc.—in which the Holy Ghost prays with us. "The Spirit Himself asketh for us."—*Rom.* viii. 26.

2. The key to Holy Scripture is the teaching of the Church—nothing else can help us through its difficulties. "Understanding that no prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation" (2 *St. Peter* i. 20), and without it we shall

The Word of God

“wrest them to our own destruction.”—2 *St. Peter* iii. 16. Therefore we must listen to the authorised teaching of the Church—in sermons, books of instruction, and meditations.

III. “And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand.”—*Deut.* vi. 8.

1. The knowledge of God’s word must be *kept up*—not learned once for all and then laid aside. “On His law He shall meditate day and night” (*Ps.* i. 2)—a continual food to the soul. “My heart is withered because I forgot to eat my bread.”—*Ps.* ci. 5. How often that happens! Like the “oil for the lamps,” to be constantly supplied.

2. Especial duty for Sunday. No one can really sanctify it without giving some time to reading, reflection, and the word of God.

3. How great the fault of those who never teach and encourage their children and household to read good books—“As the eagle enticing her young” (*Deut.* xxxii. 11)—but allow them to spend all Sunday in frivolous reading.

CONCLUSION.—“A hundredfold . . . bring forth fruit in patience.”—*St. Luke* viii. 8. The fruits of the word of God generally obtained by “patience,” by loving the word of God, and using it perseveringly and habitually; “In lege Domini voluntas ejus.”

XLIV

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SIN

INTRODUCTION.—“The wages of sin is death.”

How terrible is the justice of God! Painful but necessary consideration for mortals.

I. “I did but taste a little honey; and behold I die.”—1 *Kings* xiv. 43.

1. How short the enjoyment of sin, even if it were to last for a lifetime, instead of the few moments of earthly pleasure.

2. “Be not deceived. God is not mocked.”—*Gal.* vi. 7. “A patient rewarder.” Death is the universal doom of unforgiven sin. “Who-soever have sinned without the law,” etc.—*Rom.* ii. 12.

3. “Thy God is a consuming fire.”—*Deut.* iv. 24. “Thy judgments a great abyss.”—*Ps.* xxxv. 7. “How incomprehensible are His judgments.”—*Rom.* xi. 33. We *know* them to be most just, but cannot understand them.

Sin

4. "If in the green wood they do these things."
—*St. Luke* xxiii. 31.

The Passion of our Lord is constantly before us as our example of the terrors of God's justice.

II. "He would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him."—*Ps.* cviii. 18.

1. Hell means the absence of *all* good—*never* found on earth. How terrible, even to the worst!

2. Surrounded by unmitigated evil: necessarily clinging to evil, to rebellion, and to hate; *knowing* them to be hateful. "Like oil in his bones."—*Ps.* cviii. 18.

3. "The servants of sin." "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."—*St. John* viii. 34. If that is so even here on earth, how miserable a slavery when the time of punishment has come!

III. "And these shall go into everlasting punishment."—*St. Matt.* xxv. 46.

1. Everlasting punishment, eternal death—the most terrible and bewildering of thoughts! "Therefore the wicked shall not rise again in judgment."—*Ps.* i. 5. Never-ending misery—*never* to see the face of their Father! "I shall be hidden from Thy face."—*Gen.* iv. 14.

2. Eternity gives an element of infinity even to small things. "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire?"—*Isa.* xxxiii. 14.

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“The mighty shall be mightily tormented.”
The mighty people of the earth, the bold, the hardened, the enemies of God. “And the smoke of their torments shall ascend up for ever and ever.”—*Apoc.* xiv. 11.

All the evils of this life, however multiplied, are as *nothing* in comparison.

3. “There is fixed a great gulf.”—*St. Luke* xvi. 26. Good comfort and mercy *cannot* come near to alleviate their torments.

4. “Quid hoc ad æternitatem?” Eternity must be made the measure of all things on earth—our one guide.

CONCLUSION.—“Pierce thou my flesh with thy fear.”—*Ps.* cxviii. 120.

To fear God’s judgments is the greatest of graces; fear *them* more, and the passing evils of life less. “Initium sapientiæ timor Domini.” Let all virtues rest on the foundation of a deep and overwhelming fear of God.

XLV

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE UNJUST STEWARD

INTRODUCTION.—“Good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”—I *St. Peter* iv. 10.

We are only stewards of all we possess. It is most necessary for us to remember this; yet we are constantly tempted to forget it. Nothing we have is really our own. “You are not your own.”—I *Cor.* vi. 2.

I. “It is required among the dispensers that a man be found faithful.”—I *Cor.* iv. 2.

Fidelity requires

1. That we should remember our condition: we are *stewards* not *owners* of wealth, position and all worldly goods, including our own talents and powers of body and mind. We have no right to glorify *ourselves*. “Why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?”—I *Cor.* iv. 7.

2. That we should use all things for the glory of the Master and not our own convenience or advantage.

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3. That we should use them according to *His* will, not our own, and we must try to *find out* His will.

4. "Give an account"—how many times already have we received this warning? When will it be carried out?

II. "What shall I do?"

How did this steward act?

1. He did not delay and hide the danger, and say, "Peace, peace, and there was no peace" (*Jer.* vi. 14); but set to work manfully to prepare.

2. He saw how *pressing* the case was. "The time is short" (*1 Cor.* vii. 29), and how utterly helpless he would be when the stewardship was taken away; "to dig I am not able." How much more does this apply to *our* stewardship? What can *we* do when our Lord takes from us time, grace, the price of the Precious Blood, now left in our hands?

3. He saw that *now* was the time. "Now is the acceptable time." "The night cometh when no man can work."—*St. John* ix. 4. "Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis."

III. "Inasmuch as he had done wisely."

1. "Take thy bill and write fifty." The unjust steward made a profit for himself out of the oil, the wheat, and *everything* that passed through his hands; so can we. Prayer, daily

The Unjust Steward

work, family duties, lawful recreations, and, moreover, troubles of mind, pains of body, and crosses of every description can each be made to yield us profit—*not* dishonestly as he did, but as “children of light.”

2. “When you shall fail.” How happy will you be to find in your day of trouble that you have made “friends of the mammon of iniquity,” and made a profit out of the pleasant things of the world which were such a danger, and the dreary things which seemed such a misery! How unhappy if, like the “man of riches,” “you have found nothing in your hands.”—*Ps. lxxv. 6.*

3. “Facite vobis sacculos.” Lose no time in laying up that treasure which will then be so necessary. The miser every day adds something to his store; imitate him. “There will your heart be also.”—*St. Luke xii. 34.*

CONCLUSION.—“At what hour you think not the Son of Man will come.”—*St. Luke xii. 40.* Therefore be ready at *any* hour to render an account. *Never* go to sleep without thinking of that account and endeavouring to make it right with your Master.

XLVI

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DEATH

INTRODUCTION.—“If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace.”

The Gospel represents our Lord gazing at Jerusalem—a wonderful scene of glory, riches, and human activity. He wept because its future misery and total destruction were before His eyes. “They shall not leave a stone upon a stone.”

He wept, not for the material city, but for human souls—enjoying opportunities, but perversely neglecting them. “Oh, that they would be wise, and would understand, and would provide for their last end.”—*Deut.* xxxii. 29.

He is the loving Shepherd; with what sorrow He sees His “sheep going astray from the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls.”—1 *St. Peter* ii. 25.

The world is a sad sight, but let us see what we ourselves are doing with opportunities. Do we “know in this our day”?

Death

I. "The days shall come upon thee and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee."

1. We look on death as afar off. We do so in youth; do we see it any nearer as we grow old? It is always *near*, always *sudden* when it comes. "Death on the pale horse" (*Apoc.* vi. 8), always comes on, as "a man armed" (*Prov.* vi. 11), and in a moment casts his trench around—cutting us off. "It is nigh, even at the doors."—*St. Matt.* xxiv. 33.

2. We shall be "straitened on every side." How terrible the announcement of approaching death!—that there is no hope! How utterly powerless! How vain the strong man's strength, the wise man's wisdom! Death "will take away his armour wherein he trusted" (*St. Luke* xi. 22), and "beat him flat to the ground."

3. "Quid sum miser tunc dicturus, quem patronum rogaturus?" What provision are we making? Prudent men make provision—*insure* against evils which *may* never come: are we providing against this, which most certainly must come?

II. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."—*Ps.* cxv. 15.

What gives death its sting? "O death, where is thy victory?"—*1 Cor.* xv. 55.

It is terrible, because it has been forgotten,

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ignored, put aside, because we do not remember
“the things to our peace.”

It may be made bearable by

1. A trusting spirit. “Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for Thou art with me.”—*Ps.* xxii. 4. God has helped you through all *other* trials, and will do so on your death-bed. “Will make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.”—*Ep. cur.*

2. A generous resignation and spirit of *submission*; “Not my will but Thine be done.” Death is the greatest and most precious offering man can make. Who knows the immense value of those few hours of agony? Atoning for past sins, preparing for God’s presence, if united with our Lord’s Passion: “Factus in agonia prolixius orabat.”

III. “Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity.”—*St. Luke* xvi. 9.

What *can* we do to prepare? If those whom you have seen in their agony could return to tell you!

If they “had known in this their day,” what would they have avoided? What treasures laid up?

The great helps to a happy end are:

1. Daily prayer—real prayer—in God’s pres-

Death

ence, speaking to Him, especially the habit of good night prayers.

2. The frequent use of the sacraments. How can you hope to use them well in your necessity if you have neglected them in life ?

3. A tender devotion to the Passion. Will our Lord suffer *anyone* devout to His Passion to die unhappily ?

4. The loving prayers of Mary and Joseph, whom our Lord has made patrons of a happy death.

CONCLUSION.—I. “ Watch ye, therefore, because you know not the day nor the hour.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 13. *Any* day may be “ God’s day.”

2. There is *no* time when the Lord may not come looking for fruit, as he did on the barren fig-tree.—*St. Mark* xi. 13.

XLVII

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

DISPOSITIONS IN CHURCH

INTRODUCTION.—“This man went down to his house justified.”

The Gospel gives us an excellent lesson as to our demeanour in prayer, especially in public prayer—our external demeanour—and dispositions of heart. Important both to individuals and to the community. If we could see our Lord observing *us*, as He did the Pharisee and Publican !

I. “Enter thy chamber, and, having shut the door, pray to thy Father.”—*St. Matt.* vi. 6.

1. Figuratively applies just as well to prayer in church. You take the holy water as a sign that you are to be cleansed from external things (1), forgetting the things about you—your curiosity.

(2) Forgetting your business: the Publican no doubt was full of business, but it had all gone.

(3) Forgetting self: the Pharisee *full* of self; the Publican a model of self-forgetfulness.

Dispositions in Church

2. “*Stantes erant pedes nostri.*” The church is the vestibule of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and we like servants waiting to be noticed—to hear our Master’s voice. “As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress.”—*Ps. cxxii. 2.* Always waiting for a word, a sign.

The essence of prayer is to be face to face with our Creator.

II. “I will speak to my Lord whereas I am dust and ashes.”—*Gen. xviii. 27.*

1. The Publican sets us the example of the humility, external and internal, with which we must pray. “Standing afar off would not lift his eyes.” Compare his demeanour with that of the Pharisee.

2. We must have humility of mind; all human excellences, dignities, good deeds, become as nothing in that presence. “Thy strength shall be taken away from thee.”—*Amos iii. 11.* “And when I heard I lay in consternation upon my face.”—*Dan. x. 9.* Such the feeling of the holiest on earth and the highest in heaven. Do *we* try to feel like this?

3. How do we show it externally? “Put off the shoes from thy feet.”—*Ex. iii. 5.* “They cast their crowns before the throne.”—*Apoc. iv. 10.* Does your exterior display a like feeling,

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or a feeling of being *at home at your ease*, and so forth. External demeanour almost necessarily results from proper internal feeling.

4. Take the Publican for your model in all prayer, but especially in presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the greatest and nearest presence of God possible upon earth.

III. "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."—*Gen.* xxxii. 26.

1. What is prayer? Not a mere spiritual pastime, but a means to an end. (1) To pay a debt you owe. (2) To obtain a benefit you need, and need most urgently.

2. The Pharisee forgot this, and was thinking of his good qualities, not his debts or his needs. How many are like him, thinking of how they are to spend some time with as little trouble as may be, not how they are to succeed in getting what they need for their salvation.

3. "My lot is in thy hands."—*Psa.* xxx. 16. The extreme importance of what we want; we must persevere and *strive* with our Lord to obtain it, but we must also know *precisely* what we are asking for.

CONCLUSION.—"The Spirit worketh, dividing to everyone as he will."—*Ep.*

Do we get that portion of blessing which our Lord intends for us every time we assist at Mass?

Dispositions in Church

Would our Lord always say we “went home justified”? If not, it is from want of recollection, external carelessness, or want of purpose and meaning in our prayers. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?”—*Acts*. ix. 6.

XLVIII

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

GRACE

INTRODUCTION.—“By the grace of God I am what I am ; and His grace in me hath not been void.”—*Ep. cur.*

In these words St. Paul lays down most exactly the Catholic doctrine of grace and of its necessity. “No man can come to me except the Father draw him.”—*St. John vi. 44.*

Without God’s grace we cannot be saved.

What is grace ? It is, first, the help God gives us—actual or “preventing” grace. Secondly, the favour of God. “The charity of God poured forth on our hearts” (*Rom. v. 5*)—that is, “habitual” or “sanctifying” grace.

I. “Without Me you can do nothing.”—*St. John xv. 5.*

1. God’s help is absolutely necessary for even the least thing we can do for our salvation. “Not that we are sufficient to think anything

Grace

of ourselves.”—2 *Cor.* iii. 5. “No man can say the Lord Jesus but by the Holy Ghost.”—1 *Cor.* xii. 3.

Grace is needed to begin—“prevent”—to carry on, and to complete every good work. “Worketh in you both to will and to accomplish.”—*Phil.* ii. 13.

2. Grace is given to all. “Aperis manum tuam.”—*Ps.* cxliv. 16. “Raineth upon the just and the unjust.”—*St. Matt.* v. 45. *Enough*, at least, is given for a beginning, and more will be granted when asked for.

3. This grace is sufficient to save our souls. No one can truly say that it has been denied to him. “Ask, and you shall receive.” Whatever may be your needs, however great your temptations, God’s grace will enable you to meet them. “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

II. “Put ye on the Lord Jesus.”—*Rom.* xiii. 4.

1. Actual grace is valuable as leading to habitual grace. Habitual grace is God’s greatest gift: “the charity of God poured forth in our hearts” (*Rom.* v. 5); the “wedding garment”; the “lamps burning in our hands.”—*St. Luke* xii. 35. Far greater than the power of miracles or the gift of tongues.

2. “Caritas ædificat.” Marvellous is the

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effect of sanctifying grace on the soul. It washes away its sins, enlightens its darkness, and from the enemy of God makes it His friend. "You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—*2 Cor.* vi. 11. It is sanctifying grace that does this.

3. "He gave them power to be made the sons of God."—*St. John* i. 12. Sanctifying grace makes us sons of God, and, if sons, "heirs also." Sanctifying grace is necessarily connected with glory in heaven. No one can enter heaven without it. "How came you in without having on the wedding garment? Cast him into the exterior darkness." "They have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb."—*Apoc.* vii. 14.

4. "He would have given thee living water."—*St. John* iv. 10. Sanctifying grace is the living water which can only come from our Lord—from the merits of His Precious Blood—and can only be obtained by the means He has appointed, and by His "actual" or "preventing" grace.

III. "Receive not the grace of God in vain."—*2 Cor.* vi. 1.

1. There is a great responsibility for graces received. We *can* make them void and useless, but must render an account of them to God.

Grace

“My word shall not return to Me void.”—*Isa.* lv. 11.

2. Therefore we must desire God’s grace, and use all means to obtain it, and have great confidence in its efficacy. “*Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum,*” but at the same time,

3. We must correspond with it—that is, act according to the inspirations of grace. It is given, not idly, but for a *purpose*; “*do ut des.*” In proportion to our zeal in carrying out that purpose is it continued. “*Intellectus bonus omnibus facientibus eum.*”

How happy shall we be if we can say with St. Paul, “In me it hath not been void.”

CONCLUSION.—“Send forth Thy light and Thy truth.”—*Ps.* xlii. 3. How kindly and lovingly has grace conducted you hitherto. Have a great confidence in it, and ask it earnestly of our Lord, from whom it comes. “Forsake me not, O Lord my God.”—*Ps.* xxxvii. 22.

XLIX

THE ASSUMPTION

INTRODUCTION.—“ Assumpta est Maria in cœlum gaudet exercitus angelorum.” Our Lady’s greatest feast, the perfection and crown of all, from which a glory is reflected back on all her life.

Consider the Church’s tradition by St. John Damascene. Lect. iv. Aug. 18. “ Celebrant Archangeli, virtutes glorificant.”—*Lect.* iv. Aug. 15.

I. “ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.”—*Ps.* cxv. 15. How precious, then, was that of the Mother of God : how sweet to her ! “ Surge amica mea.”

Prepared for

1. By such intense desire, “ As the hart panteth after the fountains of water ” (*Ps.* xli. 2), during long, long years after the Ascension.

2. By such complete detachment : “ For where thy treasure is.”—*St. Matt.* vi. 21.

3. By such spotless purity : “ Immaculate, immaculate.”

The Assumption

4. By her share in our Lord's Passion. "Who have continued with me in my temptations."—*St. Luke* xxii. 28. Her seven dolours.

5. By the most ardent love for her Son and her God.

If you would imitate her most sweet and happy end, you must try humbly to imitate her preparation.

II. "In my flesh I shall see my God."—*Job* xix. 26. The most terrible moment of each creature's existence—to come once at death and again at the General Judgment.

1. How joyous to our Lady to close her eyes to this world—to her "a desert land without way and without water" (*Psa.* lxii. 3)—to open them to see *His* face—to see her Son and her Judge. What will this moment be to us?

2. Her judgment: "Once to die and after this judgment." With her it was nothing but the display of God's great gifts. "Hath done great things for me." *Magnificat*: And her own loving co-operation, "the handmaid of the Lord." In this judgment no bitterness, no self-reproach, nothing but unspeakable glory to God. What will *ours* be like?

3. "The Queen stood on thy right hand."—*Psa.* xlv. 10. If our Lord says to each ordinary Christian, "Well done, thou good and faithful

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servant," how lovingly will He present His Blessed Mother before the throne, assign to her the place at His right hand, giving her power, not over "ten cities" (*St. Luke* xix. 17), but over all redeemed by His Precious Blood.

III. "A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."—*Apoc.* xii. 1.

1. Consider the beauty of the crown which Jesus places to-day on His Mother's head—the crown of grace and the crown of justice. Of grace, since she had not the least thing which was not His gift, and glories to owe *all* to Him; of justice, because her co-operation was essential. "His grace in me hath not been void."—*1 Cor.* xv. 10. "The just Judge will render me in that day."—*2 Tim.* iv. 8.

2. "Thou hast set on his head a crown of precious stones."—*Psa.* xx. 4. Every virtue is a jewel in that crown—her humility, her purity, her charity there displayed—each act of labour and love done for Him, and especially each one of her dolours, is a pearl beyond price. How even she laboured to make that crown so beautiful.

3. "A never-fading crown of glory."—*2 St. Peter* v. 4. The crown would be nothing if it were perishable, but for eternity its lustre will

The Assumption

never grow dim. "The torrent of happiness."—*Ps.* xxxv. 9. The "delight of the Lord" (*Ps.* xxvi. 4) will never grow less.

CONCLUSION.—No one is "crowned except he strive lawfully."—2 *Tim.* ii. 5. Whilst we congratulate our Lady on her glorious Assumption, we must remember that God has prepared for us also a happy end and a glorious crown. Ask our Lady to help you so "to run that you may obtain."—1 *Cor.* ix. 24.

L

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE WORKS OF MERCY

INTRODUCTION.—“I was hungry and you gave Me to eat.”—*St. Matt.* xxv. 35. This passage puts works of mercy before us in the strongest possible way as necessary.

1. As being one of the ways in which we are to be faithful stewards of God.

2. As needful for the poor. “There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation, therefore I command thee to open thy hand.”—*Deut.* xv. 11.

3. As special means by which we may counteract the evils and faults of prosperity, and atone for our sins. “Deliver from sin and from death.”—*Tob.* iv. 11. “Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins.”—*Ecclus.* iii. 33.

I. “He maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.”—*St. Matt.* v. 45. The great lesson of to-day’s Gospel is the *universality* of charity.

The Works of Mercy

1. Not directed by personal liking or hope of reward, but to all, friends and enemies. Remember our Lord's words: "Do not even the publicans do this?"

2. Not to exclude anyone from charity on account of religion, country, party, or politics. The Samaritan our example. "For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans."—*St. John* iv. 9.

No one is so bad and undeserving as to be beyond our compassion. "Do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith," not leaving out the others.

II. "When thou didst leave thy dinner and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night."—*Tob.* xii. 12.

1. Charity means not only giving money, but a number of things, painful, revolting, humbling, and perhaps dangerous—such as the Samaritan encountered with the man stripped, wounded, and half dead. Very often much more than money is needed of us, which is harder to give.

2. Such works of charity are most useful; humbling and bringing before us the misery and weakness of human nature like Lazarus before the rich man's gate. Think how all the saints *delighted* in such works.

3. How *very* easily we are let off, and yet

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we think we are doing a great deal, and pride ourselves on our occasional half-crowns, instead of being ashamed of the smallness of our charity.

4. The Good Samaritan—our Lord's example to us—did *both* : He took the man on His shoulder and opened His purse besides.

III. "Pouring in oil and wine."

Real charity requires several things.

1. Substantial assistance, as far as your power goes. "If any say, Go in peace, be you warmed and filled, yet give not the things necessary."—*St. James* ii. 16. Words are only a mockery if you *do* nothing. The wine of charity is generosity, liberality, and self-denial.

2. But you want the oil, too, and that consists in manner and tone, in gentleness, kindness, and respect. Many give the wine, but refuse the oil, and their charity does little. "Instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."—*Gal.* vi. 1. How many show charity, as if they themselves were superior beings, looking down on human miseries, and despising them.

3. "You did it to Me." We could not fail in the right spirit if we would remember that we were doing our charity to our Lord.

4. Completeness is another characteristic of charity. The Samaritan *finished* his work.

The Works of Mercy

“Take care of him.” How many begin good works and leave them half done.

CONCLUSION.—“He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly” (2 *Cor.* ix. 6) applies to all good works, but especially to charity.

Give, and give generously. “Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.”—*St. Luke* vi. 38.

LI

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PENANCE

INTRODUCTION.—“Go show yourselves to the priests.”

This Gospel represents sin, its consequences, and its remedy, and is a lesson on the Sacrament of Penance.

I. “Ten men that were lepers stood afar off, and lifting up their voice.”

1. The leprosy made men hideous and revolting in spite of all natural beauty; so sin, the leprosy of the soul, destroys the beauty of the soul in the sight of God and His angels. Nay, the higher the qualities the more horrible the effect of the sin. If an angel could sin he would instantly become hideous; indeed, when the angels *did* sin they became devils.

2. The leprosy made men outcasts, obliged to stand afar off; when Oziás became a leper they “made haste to thrust him out.”—2 *Par.* xxvi. 20.

Penance

From being companions of angels mortal sin makes men fit company for the swine, like the prodigal son.—*St. Luke* xv. 15.

3. Leprosy made people unfit for all social duties ; so mortal sin, whilst it lasts, renders men useless for all spiritual purposes. Nothing you can then do is available for salvation, even if you suffer martyrdom. “If I deliver my body to be burned and have not charity it profiteth me nothing.”

II. “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

1. Our Lord is our only deliverer. He came “that sin may have an end.”—*Dan.* ix. 24.

He is our only and most sure remedy. Through whatever channel grace may come, it is from Him alone, and to Him we must apply, since “of His fulness we all have received.”—*St. John* i. 16.

2. But we must approach, as these lepers did, with *earnestness*, *humility*, and *confidence*. How ardent was their desire to be cleansed from their leprosy. Does our desire for pardon of our sins resemble it ?

III. “If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it.”—4 *Kings* v. 13.

1. It is for our Lord to appoint the remedy as He will. You have no right to be fastidious.

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If the lepers had refused to go to the priests, they would have deserved to die in their leprosy.

2. The Sacrament of Penance is a specific for a deadly disease, absolutely necessary—at least in *will*—for pardon.

3. It is naturally most efficacious since it contains (1) an act of submission, (2) a suitable humiliation, and is (3) the atonement for sin suggested by nature.

4. It is the channel of a special grace—(1) remedying the past, and (2) providing for the future.

It is the Sacrament in which the Father of the prodigal goes out to meet his repentant son.

CONCLUSION.—“ And he fell on his face before His feet giving thanks.”

How often has God forgiven us! Are we grateful as the leper was?

Let us glorify God for the past, and resolutely avail ourselves of the Sacrament of Penance for the future.

LII

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

INTRODUCTION.—“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.” “You cannot serve God and Mammon.”

Both the Gospel and the Epistle put before us the spiritual warfare of a Christian.

I. “The life of man upon earth is a warfare.”
—*Job*. vii. 1.

1. A perpetual warfare is going on from the cradle to the grave, from the use of reason to our death-bed, from which we *cannot* escape.

2. Warfare between irreconcilable enemies. “What fellowship is there between light and darkness?”

3. God and Mammon each claim the *whole* of men’s service, and are impatient of interference. God requires our “whole heart, soul, and strength.” So, too, the world requires all,

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and wishes to secure dominion over the whole being.

4. If we forget this warfare we are lost.

II. "How long do you halt between two sides?"—3 *Kings* xviii. 21.

1. We cannot be neutral. "He who is not with Me is against Me."

2. It is most unhappy and ignominious to be halting between opposing sides, it is painful and unprofitable.

3. How often have you been called upon to choose the part of the Lord, and to say, "the Lord is the part of my inheritance and my chalice"? And how often in words have you agreed to do so?

4. Why are you so slow in carrying this out in practice? Because it involves defying and attacking the enemy, resisting the devil, going against the world, casting down idols, and "cutting down groves," for which you haven't had courage. Yet is not this the very idea of warfare?

"I have fought the good fight," says St. Paul. Can you say so? Where are the marks of your contest? What have you done, what are you doing, to deserve the name of fighting? "You have not resisted unto blood, fighting against sin." "I chastise my body, and bring

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it into subjection, lest, perhaps, I myself should become a castaway.”—1 *Cor.* ix. 27.

III. “Put ye on the armour of God.”

1. By asking the help of God. “Without me ye can do nothing.”

2. By using the weapons God has put into your hands. What is the good of a soldier without his arms, or unable to use them?

3. These arms are prayer and the Sacraments. A man who prays well always has his weapons bright and is always able to resist the enemy. He who receives the Sacraments diligently has a perpetual help coming to him in time of need.

CONCLUSION.—“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice.”

Our first thought ought to be how best to fight this great battle, and make all creatures help us to win the victory.

LIII

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

INTRODUCTION.—“Be not deceived, God is not mocked.”—*Ep. cur.*

Our first lesson as Christians is the infinite knowledge of God. “He sees and knows all things,” “from eternity to eternity.” “All things are naked and open.”—*Heb.* iv. 13. “Who hath known the mind of the Lord?”—*Rom.* xi. 34.

Yet, in spite of this, many live as if they thought that He could be deceived by false pretences and false excuses.

People make excuses to God which they would be ashamed to make to men. They *know* they are false, yet act as if they thought they could deceive Almighty God. What more odious to Him, who is the very Truth, than want of sincerity and straightforwardness in religion?

Consequences of Sin

I. "For what things a man shall sow those also shall he reap." How reasonable; just what you expect in worldly matters. Yet

1. It seems very hard. When trouble comes people often forget how long and industriously they have sown the soil: by self-indulgence, by idleness, by neglect. How little consideration they have deserved from God, and how much they expect!

2. Even here we must expect to reap as we sow—though little in proportion—since His mercy protects us; but

3. When this life is over we shall find out how exact is God's justice. "Are not these things stored up with Me."—*Deut.* xxxii. 34. "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, number, and weight."—*Wisd.* xi. 21.

4. How great the reward of the just for things that perhaps seemed small; "venientes autem venient, cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos." On the contrary, how sad will be the fruits of many lives now apparently prosperous and happy. Time is the "seed plot" of eternity.

II. "He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption."

1. Who are those who sow in the flesh?

Those who follow the *ideas* of the flesh—that

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is, who habitually look at all things in a merely natural way.

Those who look for the *rewards* of the flesh by making the vanities, riches, and pleasures of this world their main object.

Those who are slaves to the “concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.”—1 *St. John* ii. 16.

2. Those sow in the flesh who are “desirous of vain glory.” “Amen, they have received their reward.”

Those also who by sloth yield to the inertness of the flesh.

Those who make no serious effort to rule their inclinations, but are ruled by them. “The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it.”—*Gen.* iv. 7. How easily men forget to *exercise* that dominion. “I chastise my body and bring it into subjection.”—1 *Cor.* ix. 27.

III. “Shall reap corruption.”

1. By finding out the hollowness of earthly things; “vanity of vanities,” even in this life; by finding that nature is poisoned, faults exaggerated, virtues destroyed by worldliness and excess.

2. “What fruit had you then in those things?”—*Rom.* vi. 21. How terrible will be the awaking

Consequences of Sin

in the next life. How terrible will this "corruption" then appear. "They have slept their sleep . . . and found nothing in their hands."—*Ps.* lxxv. 6.

CONCLUSION.—What are *you* sowing? Most certainly you sow *something*. Is it in the flesh or the spirit? Take any day and see.

1. What is the real intention of the day—to serve God or to please yourself? How much time do you give to God? How much to mere amusement?

2. Which has been the ruling principle of your conduct—spirit or flesh?

3. Which is victorious in that battle which is going on? For they "are contrary one to another."—*Gal.* v. 17.

LIV

THE SEVEN DOLOURS

INTRODUCTION.—“All ye that pass by the way attend and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.”—*Thren.* i. 12.

The Church celebrates the sorrows which made Mary the Queen of Martyrs. Our Lord willed His Mother to suffer, though so dear to Him,

1. That she might be “speculum justitiæ”—the most perfect mirror of “the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with infirmity.”—*Isa.* liii. 3.

2. Because otherwise something would have been wanting to her crown.

3. As an example to us that suffering was necessary for us.

I. “My chalice indeed you shall drink.”—*St. Matt.* xx. 23.

1. Our Lord allows sorrows to come on us, not because He does not love us, or delights in our pain, but because life is essentially “a warfare” (*Job.* vii. 1), which *cannot* successfully be carried on without suffering—in the training,

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in the fighting, in the victory. "Refraineth himself from all things."—*I Cor.* ix. 25. "Suffereth violence."—*St. Matt.* xi. 12. "Suffered . . . so to enter."—*St. Luke* xxiv. 26.

2. "Gold and silver are tried in the fire."—*Ecclus.* ii. 5. There can be no real virtue without suffering: it is either *sham* or imperfect, and of small intensity. It is both *proved* and *perfected* by trial—*e.g.* the martyrs.

3. "I will show him how great things he must suffer."—*Acts* ix. 16. It is necessary for any great servant of Christ to be like Him: "conformable to the image" (*Rom.* viii. 29); "the disciple is not above his Master" (*St. Matt.* x. 24); and therefore they must "drink of His chalice."

II. "Thy own soul a sword shall pierce."—*St. Luke* ii. 35.

1. Our Lady's life was a martyrdom, especially from the time of Simeon's prediction; mental suffering, perpetual anxiety; fear for Him: "Herod will seek the Child"; "a sign to be contradicted"; "the reproaches of them that reproach thee are fallen upon me."

2. A hard, laborious life, working for her Divine Son and seeing Him in such hardship; then, during the time of His mission, being so much separated from Him. How many pains

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men suffer for those they love? She is example to all in their sadness and anxiety.

III. "There stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother."—*St. John* xix. 25.

Consider her extreme sorrows during the Passion :

1. Her meeting Him outside Jerusalem ; her pain separated from Him during the earlier part ; hearing at a distance all that passed : cries of "Crucifige !" How changed that face she loved—pale, blood-stained, crowned with thorns ! How painfully that sight was imprinted on her heart !

2. At Calvary : His oblation on the cross ; the strokes of the hammer. "If I am lifted up." Those hours of waiting ; His last words, "Mother, behold thy Son" ; the last drops of His Blood.

3. "Posuit me desolatum." His Body in her arms, counting His wounds. "They have numbered all My bones."—*Pss.* xxi. 18. Each wound, each bruise was a pang to her loving heart.

4. Her one great privilege was that *all* her sufferings were unselfish, and for the sake of her Son.

CONCLUSION.—In suffering, then, we must not be "even as others who have no hope."—*I Thess.* iv. 12.

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Since we must suffer, let us do as our Lady did—suffer generously with our Lord and in conformity to His will. If nature resists, at least give Him your *will*. “Not my will.” Trying to make the pains of life a crown in our degree, like Mary’s crown of the Seven Dolours.

LV

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY

INTRODUCTION.—“ Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath Day ? ”
—*St. Luke* xiv. 5.

Our Lord in this Gospel instructs us how to keep the Sunday. He was watched by the lawyers and Pharisees.

Keeping Sunday holy is one of our greatest duties, because we, too, are watched by zealous people whom we must not scandalise ; still more, because keeping Sunday well is like the backbone of external religion, and a most powerful means of sanctification and perseverance.

I. “ The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”—*St. Matt.* xii. 8.

1. The Sunday is *not* the Jewish Sabbath, but the “ Lord’s day ”—a new day substituted in place of the Sabbath, with new and different obligations and a new spirit.

Observance of Sunday

2. Our Lord rebuked the Pharisees for unreasonable observance even of the Jewish Sabbath, and certainly we are not to be bound by their narrow views. "Let no man judge you . . . in respect of Sabbaths."—*Col.* ii. 16.

3. Nevertheless, it is a much better fault to be too strict than to be too lax. It is a terrible evil to make it a day of idleness and dissipation.

4. Sunday ought to be kept in a different way, indeed, but with greater zeal and fervour, since it commemorates our Lord's Resurrection, the ground of our faith and hope, and can give so much greater gifts than the Jewish Sabbath could give.

II. "This is the day which the Lord hath made."—*Ps.* cxvii. 24.

1. For His service; for the payment of our debt to Him, our debt of adoration, praise, and gratitude. "The Lord my God shalt thou adore." "In spirit fervent; serving the Lord."—*Rom.* xii. 11. The very object of Sunday is to remind us of these debts, and enable us to pay them.

2. "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little."—*St. Mark* vi. 31.

Our Lord calls you on Sundays, as He did His Apostles, to "rest a little" with Him, to confer with Him about your salvation, as with

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your Saviour, friend, and physician. You cannot do so very much on ordinary days; will you refuse Him? Do you, *in fact*, refuse His invitation?

3. "Draw him out on the Sabbath Day." Our Lord would, on this day especially, rescue you from sin, from worldliness, from coldness. Do you not need it after a week so much spent in the world's service? If you habitually will not allow Him to do this for you, you will fall deeper.

III. "Keep therefore the precepts and ceremonies and judgments which I command thee this day to do."—*Deut.* vii. 11.

I. Exact observance of what the Church commands for the service of God on Sundays is practically one of the highest duties of a Christian. It shows more obedience, true service, and real love than many fine words and sentiments.

2. You must make Sunday a day of rest; doing no work but what is *really* necessary, and avoiding all those things which interfere with the spirit of the day—sloth and dissipation.

3. You must never omit Mass without very serious reason. What trifling excuses men make. "One to his farm and another to his merchandise."—*St. Matt.* xxii. 5.

Observance of Sunday

4. You must not be contented with externals, but make Sunday a day of recollection, pious reading, earnest prayer, and a day sanctified by the use of the Sacraments. If you do not give at least reasonable time to these, how can it be the "Lord's Day"? How have you paid your debt to the Lord?

CONCLUSION.—"Cursed be he that hath done the work of the Lord deceitfully."—*Jer.* xlviii. 10.

If you want God's blessing on your lives, do not be *deceitful*, either by false excuses, short weights and measures, or careless service on the day God has set aside for His worship.

LVI

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CHARITY

INTRODUCTION.—“This is the greatest and first commandment.”—*Ev. cur.*

The Gospel is a great lesson about charity. This is the most essential of all virtues. “He that loveth not, abideth in death.”—1 *St. John* iii. 14.

The highest and most permanent of all virtues. “The greatest of these is charity” (1 *Cor.* xiii. 13), and, in a sense, it may be called the *only* duty of man, since it requires or comprises all virtues.

I. “If I deliver my body to be burned and have not charity it profiteth me nothing.”—1 *Cor.* xiii. 3.

1. Nothing is of any supernatural value without charity—except as a means of leading to it.

“Faith without works is dead.”—*St. James* ii. 20. Faith without love puts us into the con-

Charity

dition of the devils—the stronger it is the greater the likeness. Good works of all kinds without love are “sounding brass and tinkling cymbal,” attracting men, but not pleasing God.

2. On the contrary, with real love the smallest thing is of value—“a cup of cold water,” St. Veronica’s towel offered in the Passion, St. Mary Magdalen’s sweet ointment: it was love that gave them value. Whatever you do with fervent love our Lord will accept in the same way.

3. “Charity never falleth away.” To those who really love God all things become easy; the most difficult duties can readily be done. “Love is strong as death,” as we see in the martyrs. Difficulties and scandals take no hold on those who really love. “Charity covereth a multitude of sins” (1 *St. Peter* iv. 8), or rather it extinguishes and destroys all faults.

II. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.” Of what sort must our love be?

1. The highest: anything less is a mockery. To love God with an *inferior* love would be putting Him *after* some creature; “worshipped the creature rather than the Creator.” “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.”—*St. Matt.* x. 37.

2. But, though the highest in *kind*, it is not

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necessarily the most intense, sensible, or passionate. It means the acknowledgment that God is the source of all good, the most worthy to be loved; and that His rights come before all—and a corresponding “love of preference,” a determination never to let *any* other love interfere with what belongs to the Creator.

3. It is therefore a love of *will* rather than feeling which is required. “But it is good for me to adhere to my God.”—*Ps.* lxxii. 28. A love of value and desire. “My soul thirsteth after the strong living God.”—*Ps.* xli. 3.

4. We ought, however, to strive after a tender and personal love for God, as well as this necessary love of preference. Such was the love of the saints, and it made them saints. For this our Lord came on earth, and remains with us in the Blessed Sacrament. If we thought of Him more, and were more in His presence, could we not borrow a little fire from the hearts of the seraphim?

III. “Lovest thou Me?”—*St. John* xxi. 15. Love is so necessary. How are we to know if we have it? Not by fine words or sentiments. “Not in tongue, but in deed and in truth.”—*I St. John* iii. 18. But by

1. Zeal in keeping God’s Commandments, in doing His will. “If anyone love Me he will

Charity

keep My word.”—*St. John* xiv. 23. “For the sake of the words of Thy lips I have kept hard ways.”—*Ps.* xvi. 4.

2. By the place you give to God in your thoughts, words, and desires. “Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.”—*St. Matt.* vi. 21.

3. Especially by the time and trouble you are willing to give Him. If you loved creatures would you treat them as carelessly as Christians sometimes treat God?

CONCLUSION.—“I counsel thee to buy of Me gold fire-tried.”—*Apoc.* iii. 18. Our Lord will give us the spirit of charity if we ask it and really want it. He alone is the fountain of love. It is the fire He came to cast upon earth. “Not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us.”—1 *St. John* iv. 10.

LVII

THE ROSARY

INTRODUCTION.—“I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ ; and Him crucified.”—*I Cor.* ii. 2.

The Rosary we celebrate to-day is a devotion immensely favoured by the Church, and enriched with very many indulgences, because

1. It is so well suited for all classes and all times—night and day, sickness and health.

2. It is always providing for two important seasons—“now ” and “the hour of our death.”

3. It is constantly using the prayer taught by our Lord, and the prayer which may be called the prayer of the Incarnation, the “Hail Mary.”

4. But, most of all, because it is an easy and perpetual meditation on the life of Christ.

I. “See that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shown thee on the mount.”—*Heb.* viii. 5.

1. Our Lord is the fountain-head and pattern of all excellence ; if we would be saved we must

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“be made conformable to the image of His Son.”—*Rom.* viii. 29. “Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.”—*I Cor.* iv. 16.

2. The idea of copying implies taking the pattern in detail and observing each part separately. This is precisely what we do in the Rosary. In the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries we celebrate respectively His early life and ministry, His Passion, and His victory. These we repeat twice each week.

3. Besides the contemplation of parts we want *the spirit* of the whole. In what better way can we learn this than in company with His Blessed Mother? “*Speculum justitiæ.*” If we would enter intelligently and lovingly into the Spirit of Jesus, can we do better than follow Mary?

II. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example.”—*I St. Peter* ii. 21. To make our Lord our pattern we must

1. Imagine to ourselves the place, the scene, the company of each mystery, the stable, the garden, the cross; we must weigh all His words and actions. Every word is a lesson. How well you ought to *know* them!

2. You must enter into our Lord’s feelings, and try to arouse the emotions He would suggest—of joy, sorrow, or triumph.

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3. In the "Our Father" join with Him in looking up to our Heavenly Father in submitting yourself, doing His will, seeking His glory. "Hallowed be Thy name," "Thy will be done." How lovingly our Lord offered up the action of each mystery. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."—*St. John* iv. 34.

4. Also constantly addressing Jesus Himself. "Blessed is the fruit of thy womb." "Blessed" on so many occasions, for so many things.

5. We need not be afraid of repeating, "Prolixius orabat," "eundem sermonem dicens."

III. "I leave the world and I go to the Father."—*St. John* xvi. 28.

So our Lord would teach *us* to leave the world; to be ready when He shall call. This, the most important of His lessons, the Rosary suggests.

1. When we are standing with Mary at the foot of the cross, learning ourselves to die as we contemplate Him.

2. When we hasten joyfully with the holy women to His Resurrection, we learn not to be afraid of death but to conquer with Him.

3. In our Lady's Assumption we have the model of a happy death, and see exemplified the qualities which lead to it.

4. In her coronation we have suggested, the

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“incorruptible crown” for which we have to strive.

CONCLUSION.—“On her head a crown of twelve stars.”—*Apoc.* xii. 1.

We offer our meditation and prayers in the Rosary as a spiritual crown to our Lady, desiring to praise and glorify her for the part she had in these mysteries, and begging her to obtain for us fruitfulness for our meditation and answer to our prayers.

LVIII

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

CONTRITION

INTRODUCTION.—“A contrite and humble heart,
O God, Thou wilt not despise.”—*Ps.* 1. 19.

Our Lord curing the man with the palsy suggests the Sacrament of Penance.

1. Our Lord anticipates and answers the objection. “Who can forgive sins, but God only?”—*St. Mark* ii. 7. “He blasphemeth.” His answer is: “The Son of Man on earth.” “You are clean by reason of the Word.”—*St. John* xv. 3.

“Is it easier to say,” etc.

2. The zeal of the man’s friends shows us the importance and necessity of bringing sinners to Him. No trouble can be too great a sacrifice.

I. “Be of good heart, son.”

1. All externals are useless in the sacrament without “a good heart.” A heart *trusting* and *well-disposed*. “The Lord searcheth all hearts.”—*1 Par.* xxviii. 9.

Contrition

You must therefore use great diligence in gaining good dispositions ; honesty in accusation, contrition, and firm purposes.

2. Contrition, a hearty sorrow, is the thing *most* needed—needed to make you fit for absolution—needed before Penance was instituted, and under *all* circumstances. There never was a time in which God would forgive without it.

3. Contrition may well *by itself* obtain the pardon of sin, but must be accompanied by at least an implicit willingness to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

II. “Rend your hearts and not your garments.”—*Joel* ii. 13.

The word “contrition” means “breaking,” and is a strong word for sorrow: “broken-hearted.”

1. “Breaking” means *change* of heart, breaking of the perverse will in which sin consists. Repentance is “change of mind.”

2. A change from supernatural motives, from the fear and love of God.

3. A *supreme* sorrow ; not necessarily supreme in its intensity, but which recognises sin as the greatest of evils, and therefore includes *all* sin, at least all *mortal* sin.

4. A sorrow which contains humiliation, “*cor humiliatum*,” and some of the *fruits* of penance,

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at least the will to make satisfaction. "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance."—*St. Matt.* iii. 8. "Therefore I reprehend myself and do penance in dust and ashes."—*Job* xlii. 6. There can be no adequate contrition without *some* indignation against and will to punish the offender, and some hatred and fear of sin, at least in *will*.

III. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked."
—*Gal.* vi. 7.

The most practically important part of contrition is "purpose of amendment."

1. There can be no contrition without *real* purpose of amendment. Contrition recognises sin as the *greatest* evil, and so is inconsistent with the will to commit it under *any* circumstances.

2. Contrition is not necessarily a very *sensible* sorrow, so the best *test* of its reality is the energy of our good resolutions.

3. Purpose of amendment is the will to put away sin *entirely*—not to cover it over, or set it aside for a time.

4. It necessarily includes avoiding at least "proximate occasions" of sin. "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent."—*Ecclus.* xxi. 2. "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it."
—*Ecclus.* iii. 27.

Contrition

It is "mocking God" if we pretend to be sorry without a real intention to amend and to take some pains to do so.

CONCLUSION.—"Be of good heart." "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean."—*St. Matt.* viii. 2. Our Lord is *always* willing to forgive: "I desire not the death of the wicked."—*Ezech.* xxxiii. 11. Moreover, He will always give us the necessary dispositions if we ask for them. "Velle et perficere." Do your part that "you receive not the grace of God in vain."—*2 Cor.* vi. 1.

LIX

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THANKSGIVING

INTRODUCTION.—“There is no one found to return and give glory to God except this stranger.”—*St. Luke* xvii. 18.

The importance of thanksgiving.

1. There is no other return we *can* make for God's benefits.

2. There is nothing so likely to obtain a continuance of favours, and the grace to use them well, as a grateful spirit.

I. “I entered into thy house ; thou gavest Me no water for My feet.”—*St. Luke* vii. 44.

1. It is a great affront to our Lord if you do not make a proper thanksgiving after Communion ; if you go out immediately Mass is done and are to be found in the streets ; if you are one moment at the rails receiving Holy Communion and the next in profane gossip outside. *Could* you show greater disrespect ?

Thanksgiving

Would you treat an ordinary friend so? Is that the way Zacheus treated our Lord?

2. The time after Holy Communion is the harvest time. If a farmer took pains in preparing his crop and would not be at the trouble of gathering in, what would you say of him?

“Melior est dies una”—how valuable the time in our Lord’s presence. This is the season for gathering in the fruit; but it must be “fruit in patience” (*St. Luke* viii. 15); given to those only who will wait to gather it. Therefore “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear, and forget thy father’s house.”—*Ps.* xliv. 11.

II. “Falling down they adored Him.”—*St. Matt.* ii. 11.

I. Our thanksgiving means *adoration*; the creature before its Creator, before its first beginning and last end; absolute submission. “Cast their crowns before the throne.”—*Apoc.* iv. 10. “Adoro Te devote.” “Quid enim mihi est in cælo.”—*Ps.* lxxii. 25. The Apostles “fell upon their faces and were very much afraid.”—*St. Matt.* xvii. 6. What should *we* do?

2. It means homage and praise. The subject before his King. How great the debt we owe to Him! What a privilege to be there!

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“Blessed are Thy servants who stand before Thee always.”—3 *Kings* x. 8. “As the eyes of the servants are on the hands of their masters, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God until He have mercy on us.”—*Ps.* cxxii. 2.

3. “Mary sitting also at the Lord’s feet heard His word.”

She ought to be our model after Holy Communion. We must place ourselves at His feet, speak to Him lovingly and familiarly, and be ready to listen to the suggestions of His grace. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”—*Acts* ix. 6. “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.”—*St. Luke* xix. 8.

III. “My lot is in Thy hands.”

1. You are completely alone with our Lord after the Communion. Never more so till the awful moment when you “go forth from the world” and see Him “face to face.” Think of that moment. How insignificant all creatures will *then* appear. You can rehearse that moment now. Have you nothing to say to Him? Pilate said to our Lord, “Knowest not that I have the power to crucify Thee, and the power to release Thee?”—*St. John* xix. 10. How completely are you in our Lord’s hands—your Saviour, your physician! Who knows what you want? “Knows what is in man.” He “has the keys

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of death and hell"; "the key of David; he that openeth and no man shutteth."—*Apoc.* i. 18—iii. 7.

2. "He would have given thee living water."—*St. John* iv. 10. Our Lord has *all* treasures of sanctity and salvation for us and for others; all the gifts the saints received. "Of His fulness"; He is the "true light"; He "came to cast fire upon earth."—*St. Luke* xii. 49.

CONCLUSION.—"I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me."—*Gen.* xxxii. 26. We must try to get our Lord to remain with us—"Mane nobiscum Domine"—and to secure His abundant blessing. "When we come back from that table we ought to be like so many lions breathing fire, terrible to the devil."—*St. John Chrys. lect.* v. Sab. Oct. C.C.

We must, then, give plenty of time to thanksgiving after Holy Communion.

LX

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE WILL OF GOD

INTRODUCTION.—“Not unwise, but understanding what is the will of God.”—*Ep. cur.*

Our great duty and happiness is to do God's will. His will must be our rule of right—our compass to steer by.

I. “Do His will with a great heart and a willing mind.”—*2 Mac. i. 3.*

1. His will is adorable—free, yet unchanging; supreme, yet allowing us freedom; surrounding and penetrating all creatures. “Reaching from end to end mightily and ordering all things sweetly.”—*Wisd. viii. 1.* Infinite in power and wisdom.

“By Thy ordinance day goes on, for all things serve Thee.”—*Ps. cxviii. 91.*

What greater object of adoration than “the most high, the most holy, the most adorable will of God”?

The Will of God

2. Our free will given us that we may *freely* conform to God's will—the one essential sacrifice He asks of us. “Doth the Lord desire holocausts; and not rather that the voice of the Lord should be obeyed.”—2 *Kings* xv. 22.

II. “Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 39.

1. Religion consists in doing God's will—not in fine words or pious sentiments. “Not every one that saith to me, Lord, Lord, but he that *doth* the will of My Father”—*St. Matt.* vii. 21.

2. “Doing” means submitting, not trying to make God's words yield to ours; although we may *pray*, as our Lord did.

3. We must do it *constantly*—every day—“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me” (*St. John* iv. 34)—*simply*, not looking to our own ends, and making God's will our excuse; *vigorously*, actively, diligently; *cheerfully*. “God loves a cheerful giver.”—2 *Cor.* ix. 7.

III. “This is the will of God, your sanctification.”—1 *Thess.* iv. 3.

In this matter you *know* the will of God, whereas in others you do not.

1. Sanctity consists in freedom from sin—that is, constantly fighting against it—“That sin may have an end” (*Dan.* ix. 24)—in con-

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stantly acquiring virtues ; in constant imitation of our Lord. “To be made conformable to the image of His Son.”—*Rom.* viii. 29.

2. Sanctity acquired (1) by real desire of sanctity, (2) by diligently using the means provided for us.

CONCLUSION.—“I came from heaven not to do my own will but the will of Him that sent me.”—*St. John* vi. 38.

Try in all things to adore the will of God—to conform to it—and to do it lovingly and not of necessity—and to work hard for sanctity, because such is His will. “He that doth the will of God abideth for ever.”—I *St. John* ii. 17.

LXI

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

FORGIVENESS

INTRODUCTION.—“Shouldst thou, then, not have had compassion on thy fellow-servant ? ”—*Ev. cur.*

Forgiving is a specially Christian virtue. “Learn of Me because I am meek of heart.”—*St. Matt.* xi. 29.

Some virtues the world admires—*here*, it *often* admires the contrary vices.

I. “So shall your Heavenly Father do to you.” Readiness to forgive is absolutely necessary.

1. You cannot be pardoned without forgiveness. Your confessions would be invalid and Communion sacrilegious. “Leave your gift at the foot of the altar” (*St. Matt.* v. 23), because

2. You have no *right* to revenge. “Revenge is mine.” “Not revenging yourself.”—*Rom.* xii. 19.

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3. You cannot judge justly on account of *prejudice* and *ignorance*. “Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?”—*St. James* iv. 13.

4. Evil comes to us *justly*—by God’s permission—even through the injustice of others. “Let him alone that he may curse as the Lord hath bidden him.”—*2 Kings* xvi. 11.

II. “I say to thee not till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.”—*St. Matt.* xviii. 22.

1. Forgiveness must be unlimited—not *wishing* to put a limit.

2. Freely forgiving *real* injuries: affronts, calumnies, thinking nothing too *great*.

3. Forgiving in *trifles*; unkind words, slights, neglects. Small things the proof of a Christian and forgiving temper. If you do not forgive trifles easily, can you expect to be forgiven in serious things?

4. Forgiving from your heart, putting away revenge—serious or petty. “Forgive every one his brother from your heart.”

“Wish well to all; pray for all; and never allow yourselves any thought, word, or deed to the prejudice of anyone.”—*Catechism*.

III. “One was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents.” Motives for Christian forgiveness.

Forgiveness

1. How great our debt to God! The number of our sins—their enormity, their deliberation, their ingratitude.

2. How essential is His forgiveness to us. “If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities.”—*Ps.* cxxxix.

3. How trifling are the injuries committed against us in comparison.

4. They are committed to our fellow-servants, for whom we should have tenderness, and for whose weakness we ought to have sympathy.

CONCLUSION.—“Who when He was reviled did not revile.”—1 *St. Peter* ii. 23. Our Lord not content with precept; gives the example of His Passion.

What can we not forgive for Him who died for us?

What can we not forgive to those for whom He died?

LXII

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

TRUTHFULNESS

INTRODUCTION.—“Master, we know that thou art a true speaker and teachest the way of God in truth.”—*Ev. Cur.*

This is the testimony given by our Lord's enemies. Do all people say the same of us? A most important virtue for Christians to practise. Especially at the time and in the country in which we live.

I. “A lie is a foul blot in a man.”—*Ecclus.* xx. 26.

“There shall not enter in anything defiled, or that maketh a lie.”—*Apoc.* xxi. 26.

How severely reprobated in Holy Scripture!

1. It is evil not for its effects, but for itself: because “God is the very truth,” and hates lying; therefore there can be no “harmless lies”; every lie is a sin and will be punished as such.

Truthfulness

2. Every lie is an injury to society, though it produces no *immediate* effect; destroying confidence.

3. It is a greater injury still to him who tells it—a stain to his soul, an injury to his character, a source of future weakness, the fruitful parent of many lies.

4. A great cause of scandal.

II. “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisee which is hypocrisy.”—*St. Luke* xii. 1.

1. You cannot be *half* truthful. *Every* deliberate lie leavens the whole character and begins to spoil it. “A little leaven,” etc.

2. The most innocent *secming* lies are sometimes the greatest injury.

3. Lies of excuse, of exaggeration, of boasting, often seem harmless, but are often really the most dangerous, because they so easily become habitual, and most easily *leaven* the whole disposition.

III. “Wherefore putting away lying, speak ye the truth every one with his neighbours.”—*Eph.* iv. 25.

1. We have to learn to tell the truth, which is not always natural to us, and has to be *learned*; therefore

2. Hate lying in all shapes, under all cir-

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cumstances, under every name by which it may be called.

3. Combat the faults from which it springs—(1) cowardice, (2) desire to be always right, (3) desire of pleasing men, (4) love of praise.

4. Cultivate simplicity and straightforwardness in all things. “Let your speech be Yea, Yea, and Nay, Nay.”—*St. James* v. 12.

CONCLUSION.—“If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man.”—*St. James* iii. 2.

Imitate our Lord as a true speaker, and you will have gone far in the way of perfection.

LXIII

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS

INTRODUCTION.—“Many walk of whom I now tell you weeping that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.”—*Ep. cur.*

1. Lamentable indeed that such should be found amongst Christians—then or now. But too true.

2. The most dangerous of enemies. “If my enemy had reviled me I would indeed have borne it.”—*Ps. liv. 13.*

1. “He who denies Me before men,” etc.—*St. Luke xii. 9.*

1. Fidelity is the first thing God asks. “That a man be found faithful.”—*1 Cor. iv. 2.*

2. Therefore those who deny their religion, by word, or deed, or omission, either through love of money—as Judas did—love of the world’s favour, or through cowardice, are enemies of the cross.

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3. A thing that *appears* trifling—a kindness to others; observance of usages of society, etc., as men call them, may be a real denial, as a few grains of incense offered to idols.

4. Great danger of these times in many ways. Denying your religion means denying Christ.

II. “Who mind earthly things” (*Eph. cur*)—that is, who make them their last end.

Dives—with his purple and fine linen, and sumptuous dinners—was one of these.

1. Those who make idols of worldly things. Fixing their affections, giving worship of their desires, to creatures. “Keep yourselves from idols.”—1 *John* v. 21. “Which is a serving of idols.”—*Eph.* v. 5.

2. Those who “mind the main chance”—that is, make this world’s success their *first* object and put religion second. “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.”—*St. Matt.* x. 37.

3. Those who follow riches and pleasures so eagerly as to forget God. “The thorns grew up and choked it.”—*St. Matt.* xiii. 7.

All such are enemies of the cross. How many there are amongst Christians!

III. “Every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.”—*Apoc.* i. 7.

1. How terrible for enemies of the cross when

Enemies of the Cross

the “ sign of the Son of Man ” appears and men are “ withering away with fear ” !

2. Finding themselves *slaves* to creatures. “ Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”—*St. John* viii. 34.

3. Awaking to find themselves destitute. “ The men of riches have found nothing in the hands.”—*Ps.* lxxv. 6.

4. Realising that “ the wages of sin is death.”—*Rom.* vi. 23.

CONCLUSION.—Stand up for God. “ Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee.”—*St. Matt.* xxvi. 35.

“ Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice.”—*St. Matt.* vi. 33.

LXIV

ALL SAINTS

INTRODUCTION.—“ Oh, how glorious is the kingdom,” etc.—*Ant. Mag.* ii. v.

Festival of the *whole* Church. Brings before us the three parts—triumphant, militant, and suffering; all these united under our Lord, their head.

Tells us *practically* of the “ Communion of Saints.” No sooner have we finished rejoicing than we beg sympathy and prayer for the faithful departed.

I. “ I saw a great multitude which no man could number.” A precious glimpse of heaven.

1. “ The ancient of days.”—*Dan.* vii. 9.
“ His train filled the temple.”—*Isa.* vi. 1.
“ Thousands of thousands.”—*Dan.* vii. 10.
How numerous! how glorious! how happy!

2. “ To Thee all the angels ”; “ to Thee the cherubim and seraphim ”—the highest created intelligences; the most burning hearts; nine choirs, each reflecting the glory of the Creator.
“ The Lamb is the lamp thereof.”—*Apoc.* xxi. 23.

All Saints

“Of whose fulness we all have received.”—*St. John* i. 16.

3. “Thee the glorious choir of Apostles” on their “twelve thrones.” “I will not call you servants,” and sharing with them.

Apostolic men who accomplished their work—*St. Gregory*, *St. Augustine*, *St. Patrick*, the Apostles of nations; *St. Benedict*, *St. Dominic*, *St. Francis*, fathers of armies of apostles.

Many a poor priest, whose work God alone knows.

4. “Thee, the white-robed army of martyrs.” Special unmatched glory of the martyrs. “Greater love no man hath.” Glorious with their palms of victory.

5. So of all the saints—like, yet unlike. “Star differeth from star.”—*1 Cor.* xv. 41.

II. “Of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues.”

1. A crowd, not of heroes, but poor people like ourselves; with work and temptation like ours; who fell and rose again; reckless and penitent; nearly lost, perhaps, many times. See now how beautiful and majestic. No spot disfigures them—they have seen our Lord face to face.

2. “Neither barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free.”—*Col.* iii. 11.

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How different on earth! Language, dress, manners; rich and poor; learned and ignorant; Kings and Princes—a few—beggars like Lazarus; soldiers and merchants; servants and labourers; hosts of the poor and patient whom the world knew not.

3. “All were baptised in the cloud and in the sea.”—1 *Cor.* x. 2.

All experienced trials, labours, perhaps stains and falls of this life; all had exactly our means of salvation—and no more.

4. What they did, cannot you do?

III. “Thou has redeemed us to God in Thy blood.”—*Apoc.* v. 9. Unlike as they are, they are alike in this.

1. “They have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”—*Apoc.* vii. 14. Not one there but so washed—most of them again and again. “If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me.”—*St. John* xiii. 8.

2. “Palms in their hands.” Each one has fought the good fight—some on a greater, some smaller scale—no room for cowards. “To him that overcometh I would give to eat of the tree of life,” etc.—*Apoc.* ii. 7.

3. Were all found “watching” with “wedding garments,” and “lamps lighted,” when the Lord called.

All Saints

These were the conditions on which they alone were saved.

CONCLUSION.—Venerate all who “are gone before us with the sign of faith and repose in the sleep of peace.”

Imitate their example—they are spectators of your combat.

Trust in their prayers. “How long, holy and true.”—*Apoc.* vi. 10. They can never forget God’s kingdom on earth, for which they toiled and prayed here.

LXV

THE HOLY SOULS

INTRODUCTION. — After looking up to the Church triumphant, we turn at once to the Church suffering. Devotion of the month of November. A vast realm of suffering souls—our Lord's kingdom—where His power, wisdom, and love are displayed—as in heaven, as much but how differently!

How vast, like sands of the sea! How many enter it every day, from every nation, every class!

I. "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth."—*Heb.* xii. 6. They are here suffering *because* He loves them so well. They are the Holy Souls.

1. Chosen and safe. Each one has seen our Lord face to face—had one loving look, which still haunts him.

2. Sinless. "I will turn my hand to thee, and will purge away thy dross."—*Isa.* i. 25. Not a shadow of sin, fault, or unruly affection remains.

The Holy Souls

3. Patient as were no martyrs—resigned and acquiescing.

4. Loving as never saints on earth did.

5. Deserving our reverence and love.

II. “When shall I come and appear before the face of God?”—*Ps.* xli. 3.

1. They are for the time helpless. “Bound hand and foot” in the exterior darkness.

2. Suffering from hope deferred, and thirsting for the sight of God. “My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God.”—*Ps.* xli. 3.

3. Sinless yet bound to former sins as to a corpse.

“Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—*Rom.* vii. 24. Sins hateful, yet their own. “For my iniquities have gone over my head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me.”

4. Pains appropriate to each fault. “The fire shall try each man’s work.”—*1 Cor.* iii. 13.

5. Suffering in proportion to the greater purity and knowledge they possess. “Behold in peace my bitterness is most bitter.”—*Isa.* xxxviii. 17.

6. Most dear to God. Bought, “not with corruptible gold and silver,” but with His Precious Blood, His tears, His pains.

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7. Most dear to us. Our brethren, benefactors, and objects of love given us by God.

III. "Have mercy on me, at least you my friends."—*Job*. xix. 21. Extraordinary that sinners can help them.

1. Their time past. "The night cometh when no man can work."—*St. John* ix. 4.

2. We have at command the treasures of the Precious Blood—now taken from them. They *might* have used them, but did not.

3. It is the will of God that one member of the body should help the other.

4. Our means of helping them are *only* by applying for them the merits of Christ's Precious Blood, by offering for them Masses and prayers, gaining indulgences, doing good works, available through His merits.

5. You must be in the grace of God yourselves if you hope to be heard for them. Otherwise may not you expect to hear, "Why dost thou declare My justices?" etc.—*Psa.* xlix. 16.

CONCLUSION. — "Blessed are the merciful." Your time is coming fast. "With what measure you mete," etc. "To-day for Me; to-morrow for thee." How much shall we one day wish we had been fervent and diligent in praying for the dead!

LXVI

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION.—“Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.”—*Ev. Cur.*

The end of the Church's year recalls the end of our lives, and the Church puts the general judgment before us.

How many generations have heard these words—yet the end is not come!

Yet they are truly fulfilled to each generation as it passes. “For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.”—*Rom. xiv. 10.*

We do not know when the world's judgment will come—“it is not yours to know” (*Acts i. 7*)—but *ours* is not far off, and to each it will bring the lesson the Gospel speaks of.

I. “I will reprove thee, and set thee before thy face.”—*Ps. xlix. 21.*

1. How sudden—even with longest prepara-

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tion. "A cry was made: Behold the bridegroom cometh."—*St. Matt.* xxv. 6.

Change: from bed, room, friends, and surroundings to the presence of the Judge. Surrounded, overwhelmed by His Light. "Thou enlightenest wonderfully from the everlasting hills."—*Psa.* lxxv. 5.

2. How changed shall we be! Man, independent, haughty, self-sufficient—finding out that he is "poor and blind and naked."—*Apoc.* iii. 17.

3. All concealments gone, false views cleared up, excuses silenced. Conscience, long neglected, or perverted perhaps, "bearing witness,"—*Rom.* ii. 15.

4. What shall we read, at that first look, in the face of the Son of God? *Quid sum miser tunc dicturus—judicanti responsurus?*

II. "I will search Jerusalem with lamps."—*Soph.* i. 12.

1. The accuracy of God's judgment: counting, weighing, measuring "all things in measure, number, and weight."—*Wisd.* xi. 21.

2. Every idle word (*Matt.* xii. 36) and foolish thought. Could you bear it for a day? "Are not these things stored up with me?"—*Deut.* xxxii. 34.

"If thou shalt observe iniquities."—*Psa.* cxxix.

Judgment

3. Display of God's dealings with *us*—not with others, but with you. “That thou mayest overcome when thou art judged.”—*Ps.* 1. 6.

III. “Out of thy own mouth I judge thee” (*St. Luke* xix. 22)—from your own doings and professions.

1. You were a man—with a man's intellect, courage, and feelings; you used these qualities for yourself; did you use them for Me?

2. You enjoyed position in the world, and claimed rights; were husband, father, man of business; undertook obligations and made professions; do your works correspond?

3. You were a Christian—as such must be judged. Have you acted up to your professions, principles, and advantages—to the promises of your baptism?

How hard to answer all this!

CONCLUSION.—“Once to die.”—*Heb.* ix. 27. We can be judged but once; that first judgment definitive. Are you prepared for it?

“Behold the judge standeth before the door.”—*St. James* v. 9. As this year has passed, so will your life. You have no time to lose.

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